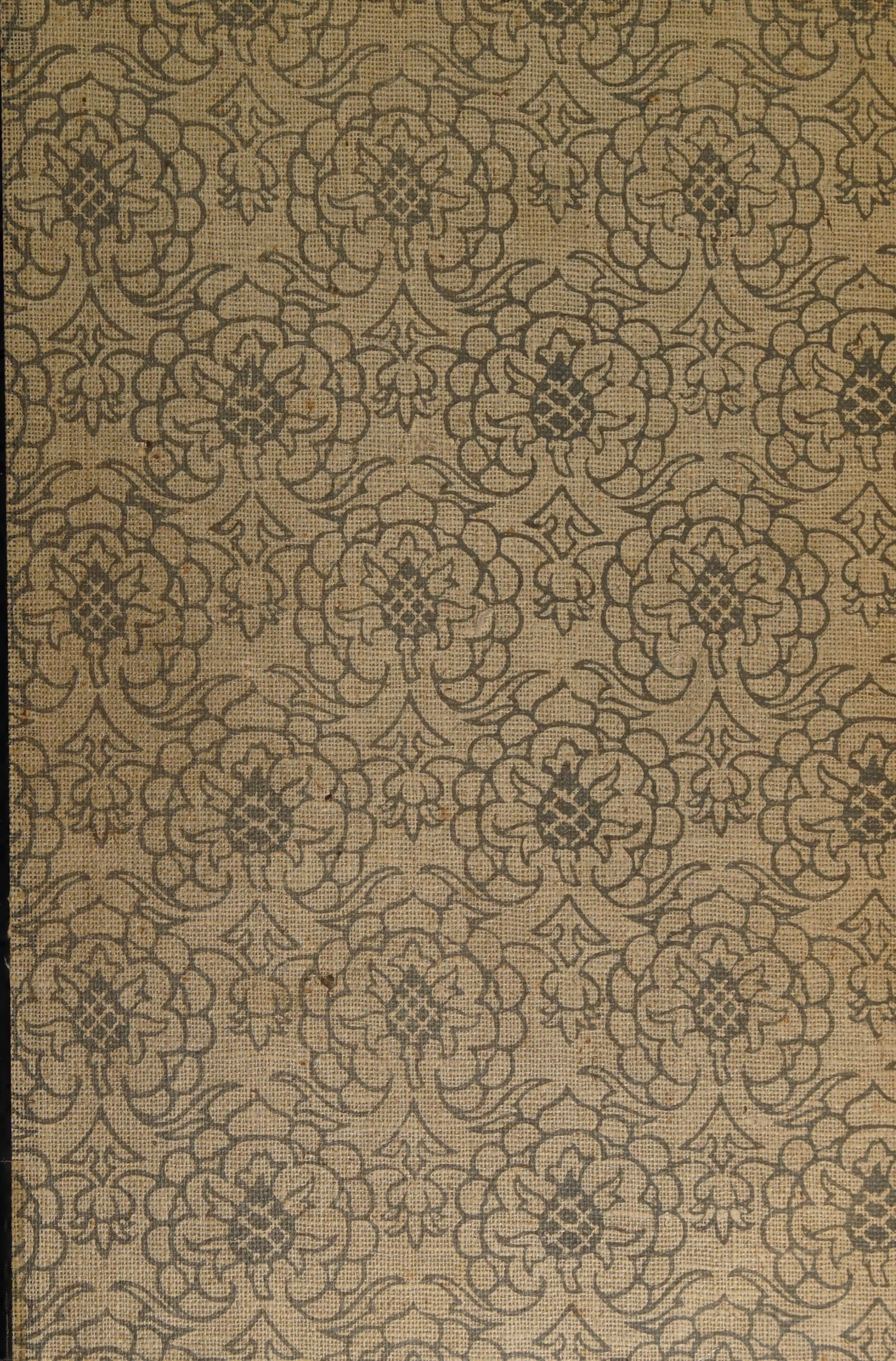

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THE DECAMERON

THE MODELL
OF WIT, MIRTH, ELOQUENCE AND CONVERSATION

FRAMED IN TEN DAYES, OF AN HUNDRED CURIOUS
PIECES, BY SEVEN HONOURABLE LADIES,
AND THREE NOBLE GENTLEMEN;
PRESERVED TO POSTERITY BY THE RENOWNED

JOHN BOCCACCIO

THE FIRST REFINER OF ITALIAN PROSE

*Translated into English anno 1620, with an Introduction by Edward
Hutton and Wood-cuts in the Renaissance manner by*

FRITZ KREDEL

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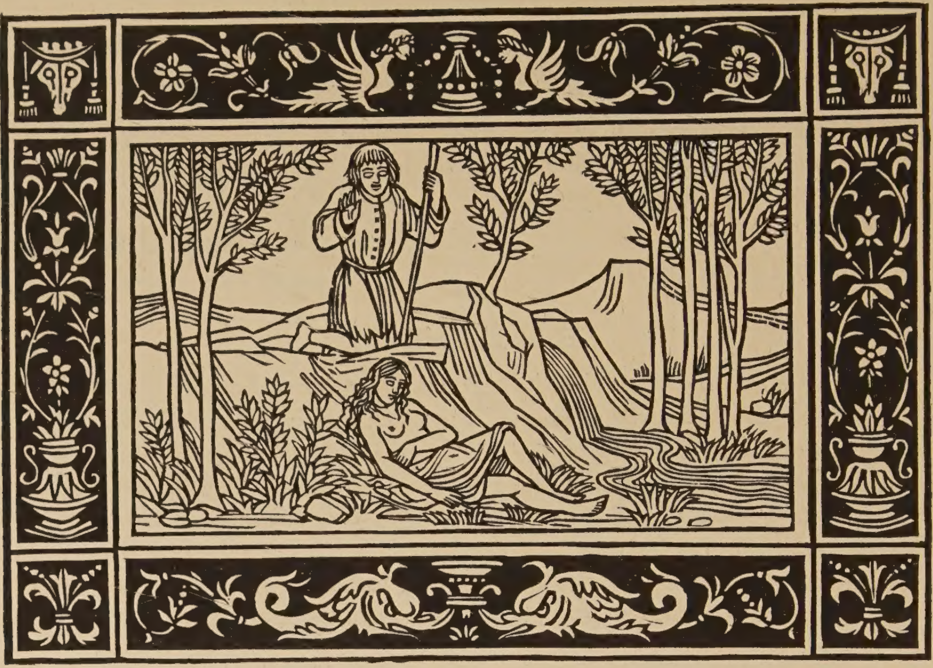


WHEREBY IS APPROVED, THAT LOVE (OFTENTIMES) MAKETH A MAN BOTH WISE AND VALIANT.

Chynon, *by falling in Love, became wise, and by force of Armes, winning his faire Lady Iphigenia on the Seas, was afterward imprisoned at Rhodes. Being delivered by one named Lysimachus, with him he recovered his Iphigenia againe, and faire Cassandra, even in the middest of their marriage. They fled with them into Candye, where after they had married them, they were called home to their owne dwelling.*

According to the ancient Annales of the Cypriots, there sometime lived in Cyprus, a Noble Gentleman, who was commonly called Aristippus, and exceeded all other of the Country in the goods of Fortune. Divers children he had, but (amongst the rest) a Sonne, in whose birth he was more infortunate then any of the rest; and continually greeved, in regard, that having all the compleate perfections of beauty, good forme, and manly parts, surpassing all other youths of his age or stature, yet hee wanted the reall ornament of the soule, reason and judgement; being (indeed a meere Ideot or Foole,) and no better hope to be expected of him. His true name, according as he received it by Baptisme, was Galesus, but because neyther by the laborious paines of his Tutors indulgence, and faire endevour of his parents, or ingenuity of any other, he could not be brought to civility of life, understanding of Letters, or common carriage of a reasonable creature: by his grosse and deformed kinde of speech, his qualities also savouring rather of brutish breeding, then any way derived from manly education; as an Epithite of scorne and derision, generally, they gave him the name of Chynon, which in their native Countrey language, and divers other beside, signifieth a very Sot or Foole, and so was he termed by every one.

This lost kinde of life in him, was no meane burthen of greefe unto his Noble Father, and all hope being already spent, of any future happy recovery, he gave command (because he would not alwaies have such a sorrow in his sight) that he should live at a Farme of his owne in a Country Village, among his Peazants and Plough-Swaines. Which was not any way distastefull to Chynon, but well agreed with his owne naturall disposition; for their rurall qualities, and grosse behaviour pleased him beyond the Cities civility. Chynon living thus at his Fathers Countrey Village, exercising nothing else but rurall demeanour, such as then delighted him above all other: it chanced upon a day about the houre of noone, as hee was walking over the fields, with a long staffe on his necke, which commonly he used to carry; he entred in to a small thicket, reputed the goodliest in all those quarters, and by reason it was then the month of May, the Trees had their leaves fairely shot forth.

When he had walked through the thicket, it came to passe, that (even as good Fortune guided him) hee came into a faire Meadow, on every side engirt with Trees, and in one corner thereof stoode a goodly Fountaine, whose current was both coole and cleare. Hard by it, upon the greene grasse, he espied a very beautifull young Damosell, seeming to be fast asleepe, attired in such fine loose garments, as hidde very little of her white body: onely from the girdle downward, she ware a kirtle made close unto her, of interwoven delicate silke; and at her feete lay two other Damosels sleeping, and a servant in the same manner. No sooner had Chynon fixed his eye upon her, but he stood leaning upon his staffe; and viewed her very advisedly, without speaking a word, and in no meane admiration, as if he had never seene the forme of a woman before. He began then to feele in his harsh rurall understanding (whereinto never till now, either by painfull instruction, or all other good meanes used to him, any honest civility had power of impression) a strange kinde of humour to awake, which informed his grosse and dull spirite, that this Damosell was the very fairest, which ever any living man beheld.

Then he began to distinguish her parts, commending the tresses of her haire, which he imagined to be of gold; her forehead, nose, mouth, necke, armes, but (above all) her brests, appearing (as yet) but onely to shew themselves, like two little mountaines. So that, of a fielden clownish lout, he would needs now become a judge of beauty, coveting earnestly in his soule, to see her eyes, which were veiled over with sound sleepe, that kept them fast enclosed together, and onely to looke on them, hee wished a thousand times, that she would awake. For, in his judgement, she excelled all the women that ever he had seene, and doubted, whether she were some Goddesse or no; so strangely was he metamorphosed from folly, to a sensible apprehension, more then common. And so farre did this sodaine knowledge in him extend; that he could conceive of divine and celestiall things, and that they were more to be admired and reverenced, then those of humane or terrene consideration; wherefore the more gladly he contented himselfe, to tarry till she awaked of her owne accord. And although the time of stay seemed tedious to him, yet notwithstanding, he was overcome with such extraordinary contentment, as he had no power to depart thence, but stood as if he had bin glued fast to the ground.

After some indifferent respite of time, it chanced that the young Damosel (who was named Iphigenia) awaked before any of the other with her, and lifted up her head, with her eyes wide open, she saw Chynon standing before her, leaning still on his staffe; whereat marvailing not a little, she saide unto him: Chynon, whither wanderest thou, or what dost thou seeke for in this wood? Chynon, who not onely by his countenance but likewise his folly, Nobility of birth, and wealthy possessions of his father, was generally knowne throughout the Countrey, made no answere at all to the demand of Iphigenia: but so soone as he beheld her eyes open, he began to observe them with a constant regard, and being perswaded in his soule, that from them flowed such an unutterable singularity, as he had never felt till then. Which the young Gentlewoman well noting, she began to wax fearefull, least these stedfast lookes of his, should incite his rusticity to some attempt, which might redound to her dishonour: wherefore awaking her women and servants, and they all being risen, she saide. Farewell Chynon, I leave thee to thine owne good Fortune; whereto hee presently replyed, saying: I will go with you. Now, although the Gentlewoman refused his company, as dreading some acte of incivility from him: yet could she not devise any way to be rid of him, till he had brought her to her owne dwelling, where taking leave mannerly of her, he went directly home to his Fathers house, saying: Nothing should compell him to live any longer in the muddy Country. And albeit his Father was much offended hereat, and all the rest of his kindred and friends: (yet not knowing how to helpe it) they suffered him to continue there still, expecting the cause of this his so sodaine alteration, from the course of life, which contented him so highly before.

Chynon being now wounded to the heart (where never any civill instruction could before get entrance) with loves piercing dart, by the bright beauty of Iphigenia, mooved much admiration (falling from one change to another) in his Father, Kindred, and all else that knew him. For first, he requested of his Father, that he might be habited and respected like to his other Brethren, whereto right gladly he condiscended. And frequenting the company of civill youths, observing also the cariage of Gentlemen, especially such as were amorously enclined: he grew to a beginning in short time (to the wonder of every one) not onely to understand the first instruction of letters, but also became most skilfull, even amongst them that were best exercised in Philosophy. And afterward, love to Iphigenia being the sole occasion of this happy alteration, not onely did his harsh and clownish voyce convert it selfe more mildely, but also hee became a singular Musitian, and could perfectly play on any instrument. Beside, he tooke delight in the riding and managing of great horses, and finding himselfe of a strong and able body, he exercised all kinds of Military Disciplines, as well by Sea, as on the land. And, to be breefe, because I would not seeme tedious in the repetition of all his vertues, scarsly had he attained to the fourth yeare, after he was thus falne in love, but hee became generally knowne, to be the most civill, wise, and worthy Gentleman, aswell for all vertues enriching the minde, as any whatsoever to beautifie the body, that very hardly he could be equalled throughout the whole kingdome of Cyprus.

What shall we say then (vertuous Ladies) concerning this Chynon? Surely nothing else, but that those high and divine vertues, infused into his gentle soule, were by envious Fortune bound and shut up in some small angle of his intellect, which being shaken and set at liberty by love, (as having a farre more potent power then Fortune, in quickning and reviving the dull drowsie spirits) declared his mighty and soveraigne Authority, in setting free so many faire and precious vertues unjustly detayned, to let the worlds eye behold them truly, by manifest testimony from whence he can deliver those spirits subjected to his power, and guid them (afterward) to the highest degrees of honour. And although Chynon by affecting Iphigenia, failed in some particular things; yet notwithstanding, his Father Aristippus duely considering, that love had made him a man, whereas (before) he was no better then a beast: not onely endured all patiently, but also advised him therein, to take such courses as best liked himselfe. Neverthelesse, Chynon (who refused to be called Galesus, which was his naturall name indeed) remembring that Iphigenia tearmed him Chynon, and coveting (under this title) to accomplish the issue of his honest amorous desire: made many motions to Ciphæus the Father of Iphigenia, that he would be pleased to let him enjoy her in marriage. But Ciphæus told him, that he had already passed his promise for her, to a Gentleman of Rhodes, named Pasimondo, which promise he religiously intended to performe.

The time being come, which was concluded on for Iphigeniaes marriage, in regard that the affianced husband had sent for her: Chynon thus communed with his owne thoughts. Now is the time (quoth he) to let my divine Mistresse see, how truly and honourably I doe affect her, because (by her) I am become a man. But if I could be possessed of her, I should growe more glorious, then the common condition of a mortall man, and have her I will, or loose my life in the adventure. Being thus resolved, he prevailed with divers young Gentlemen his friends, making them of his faction, and secretly prepared a Shippe, furnished with all things for a Navall fight, setting sodainly forth to Sea, and hulling abroad in those parts by which the vessell should passe, that must convey Iphigenia to Rhodes to her husband. After many honours done to them, who were to transport her thence unto Rhodes, being imbarked, they set saile upon their Bon viaggio.

Chynon, who slept not in a businesse so earnestly importing him, set on them (the day following) with his Ship, and standing aloft on the decke, cryed out to them that had the charge of Iphigenia, saying. Strike your sayles, or else determine to be sunke in the Sea. The enemies to Chynon, being nothing danted with his words, prepared to stand upon their owne defence; which made Chynon, after the former speeches delivered, and no answer returned, to command the grapling Irons to be cast forth, which tooke such fast hold on the Rhodians shippe, that (whether they would or no) both the vessels joyned close together. And he shewing himselfe fierce like a Lyon, not tarrying to be seconded by any, stepped aboord the Rhodians ship, as if he made no respect at all of them, and having his sword ready drawne in his hand (incited by the vertue of unfaigned love) laied about him on all sides very manfully. Which when the men of Rhodes perceived, casting downe their weapons, and all of them (as it were) with one voyce, yeelded themselves his prisoners: whereupon he said.

Honest Friends, neither desire of booty, nor hatred to you, did occasion my departure from Cyprus, thus to assaile you with drawne weapons: but that which hereto hath most mooved me, is a matter highly importing to me, and very easie for you to grant, and so enjoy your present peace. I desire to have faire Iphigenia from you, whom I love above all other Ladies living, because I could not obtaine her of her father, to make her my lawfull wife in marriage. Love is the ground of my instant Conquest, and I must use you as my mortall enemies, if you stand upon any further tearmes with me, and do not deliver her as mine owne: for your Pasimondo, must not enjoy what is my right, first by vertue of my love, and now by Conquest: Deliver her therefore, and depart hence at your pleasure.

The men of Rhodes, being rather constrained thereto, then of any free disposition in themselves, with teares in their eyes, delivered Iphigenia to Chynon; who beholding her in like manner to weepe, thus spake unto her. Noble Lady, do not any way discomfort your selfe, for I am your Chynon, who have more right and true title to you, and much better doe deserve to enjoy you, by my long continued affection to you, then Pasimondo can any way plead; because you belong to him but onely by promise. So, bringing her aboord his owne ship, where the Gentlemen his companions gave her kinde welcome, without touching any thing else belonging to the Rhodians, he gave them free liberty to depart.

Chynon being more joyfull, by the obtaining of his hearts desire, then any other conquest else in the world could make him, after he had spent some time in comforting Iphigenia, who as yet sate sadly sighing; he consulted with his companions, who joyned with him in opinion, that their safest course was, by no meanes to returne to Cyprus; and therefore all (with one consent) resolved to set saile for Candye, where every one made account, but especially Chynon, in regard of ancient and new combined Kindred, as also very intimate friends, to finde very worthy entertainement, and so to continue there safely with Iphigenia. But Fortune, who was so favourable to Chynon, in granting him so pleasing a Conquest, to shew her constancy, so sodainly changed the inestimable joy of our jocond Lover, into as heavy sorrow and disaster. For, foure houres were not fully compleated, since his departure from the Rhodians, but darke night came upon them, and he sitting conversing with his faire Mistresse, in the sweetest solace of his soule; the winds began to blow roughly, the Seas swelled angerly, and a tempest arose impetuously, that no man could see what his duty was to do, in such a great unexpected distresse, nor how to warrant themselves from perishing.

If this accident were displeasing to poore Chynon, I thinke the question were in vaine demanded: for now it seemeth to him, that the Godds had granted his cheefe desire, to the end he should dye with the greater anguish, in losing both his love and life together. His friends likewise, felte the selfesame affliction, but especially Iphigenia, who wept and greeved beyond all measure, to see the ship beaten with such stormy billowes, as threatned her sinking every minute. Impatiently she cursed the love of Chynon, greatly blaming his desperate boldnesse, and maintaining, that so violent a tempest could never happen, but onely by the Gods displeasure, who would not permit him to have a wife against their will; and therefore thus punished his proud presumption, not onely in his unavoidable death, but also that her life must perish for company.

She continuing in these wofull lamentations, and the Mariners labouring all in vaine, because the violence of the tempest encreased more and more, so that every moment they expected wracking: they were carried (contrary to their owne knowledge) very neere unto the Isle of Rhodes, which they being no way able to avoyd, and utterly ignorant of the Coast; for safety of their lives, they laboured to land there if possibly they might. Wherein Fortune was somewhat furtherous to them, driving them into a small gulfe of the Sea, whereinto (but a little while before) the Rhodians, from whom Chynon had taken Iphigenia, were newly entred with their ship. Nor had they any knowledge each of other, till the breake of day (which made the heavens to looke more clearly) gave them discovery of being within a flight shoote together. Chynon looking forth, and espying the same ship which he had left the day before, hee grew exceeding sorrowfull, as fearing that which after followed, and therefore hee willed the Mariners, to get away from her by all their best endeavour, and let fortune afterward dispose of them as she pleased; for into a worse place they could not come, nor fall into the like danger.

The Mariners employed their very utmost paines, and all proved but losse of time: for the winde was so sterne, and the waves so turbulent, that still they drove them the contrary way: so that striving to get forth of the gulfe, whether they would or no, they were driven on land, and instantly knowne to the Rhodians, whereof they were not a little joyfull. The men of Rhodes being landed, ran presently to the neere-neighbouring Villages, where dwelt divers worthy Gentlemen, to whom they reported the arrivall of Chynon, what fortune befell them at Sea, and that Iphigenia might now be recovered againe with chastisement to Chynon for his bold insolence. They being very joyfull of these good newes, took so many men as they could of the same Village, and ran immediately to the Sea side, where Chynon being newly Landed and his people, intending flight into a neere adjoyning Forrest, for defence of himselfe and Iphigenia, they were all taken, led thence to the Village, and afterwards to the chiefe City of Rhodes.

No sooner were they arrived, but Pasimondo, the intended Husband for Iphigenia (who had already heard the tydings) went and complained to the Senate, who appointed a Gentleman of Rhodes named Lysimachus, and being that yeere soveraigne Magistrate over the Rhodians, to go well provided for the apprehension of Chynon and his company, committing them to prison, which accordingly was done. In this manner, the poore unfortunate lover Chynon, lost his faire Iphigenia, having won her in so short a while before, and scarsely requited with so much as a kisse. But as for Iphigenia, she was royally welcommed by many Lords and Ladies of Rhodes, who so kindely comforted her, that she soone forgotte all her greefe and trouble on the Sea, remaining in company of those Ladies and Gentlewomen, untill the day determined for her marriage.

At the earnest entreaty of divers Rhodian Gentlemen, who were in the Ship with Iphigenia, and had their lives courteously saved by Chynon: both he and his friends had their lives likewise spared, although Pasimondo laboured importunately, to have them all put to death; onely they were condemned to perpetuall imprisonment, which (you must thinke) was most greevous to them, as being now hopelesse of any deliverance. But in the meane time, while Pasimondo was ordering his nuptiall preparation, Fortune seeming to repent the wrongs she had done to Chynon, prepared a new accident, whereby to comfort him in this deepe distresse, and in such manner as I will relate unto you.

Pasimondo had a Brother, yonger then he in yeeres, but not a jot inferiour to him in vertue, whose name was Hormisda, and long time the case had bene in question, for his taking to wife a faire young Gentlewoman of Rhodes, called Cassandra; whom Lysimachus the Governour loved very dearly, and hindred her marriage with Hormisda, by divers strange accidents. Now Pasimondo perceiving, that his owne Nuptials required much cost and solemnity, hee thought it very convenient, that one day might serve for both their Weddings, which else would lanch into more lavish expences, and therefore concluded, that his brother Hormisda should marry Cassandra, at the same time as he wedded Iphigenia. Hereupon, he consulted with the Gentlewomans parents, who liking the motion as well as he, the determination was set downe, and one day to effect the duties of both.

When this came to the hearing of Lysimachus, it was very greatly displeasing to him, because now he saw himselfe utterly deprived of al hope to attaine the issue of his desire, if Hormisda received Cassandra in marriage. Yet being a very wise and worthy man, he dissembled his distaste, and began to consider on some apt meanes, whereby to disappoint the marriage once more, which he found impossible to be done, except it were by way of rape or stealth. And that did not appeare to him any difficult matter, in regard of his Office and Authority: onely it would seeme dishonest in him, by giving such an unfitting example. Neverthelesse, after long deliberation, honour gave way to love, and resolutely he concluded to steale her away, whatsoever became of it.

Nothing wanted now, but a convenient company to assist him, and the order how to have it done. Then he remembred Chynon and his friends, whom he detained as his prisoners, and perswaded himselfe, that he could not have a more faithfull friend in such a busines, then Chynon was. Hereupon, the night following, he sent for him into his Chamber, and being alone by themselves, thus he began. Chynon (quoth he) as the Gods are very bountifull, in bestowing their blessings on men, so do they therein most wisely make proofe of their vertues, and such as they finde firme and constant, in all occurrences which may happen, then they make worthy (as valiant spirits) of the very best and highest merites. Now, they being willing to have more certain experience of thy vertues, then those which heretofore thou hast shewne, within the bounds and limits of thy fathers possessions, which I know to be superabounding: perhaps do intend to present thee other occasions, of more important weight and consequence.

For first of all (as I have heard) by the piercing solicitudes of love, of a senselesse creature, that made thee to become a man endued with reason. Afterward, by adverse fortune, and now againe by wearisome imprisonment, it seemeth that they are desirous to make tryall, whether thy manly courage be changed, or no, from that which heretofore it was, when thou enjoyedst a matchlesse beauty, and lost her againe in so short a while. Wherefore, if thy vertue be such as it hath bin, the Gods can never give thee any blessing more worthy acceptance, then she whom they are now minded to bestow on thee: in which respect, to the end that thou mayst re-assume thy wanted heroicke spirit, and become more couragious than ever heretofore, I will acquaint thee withall more at large.

Understand then Noble Chynon, that Pasimondo, the onely glad man of thy misfortune, and diligent sutor after thy death, maketh all hast hee can possibly devise to do, to celebrate his marriage with thy faire Mistresse: because he would plead possession of the prey, which Fortune (when she smiled) did first bestow, and (afterward frowning) tooke from thee againe. Now, that it must needs be very irkesome to thee (at least if thy love bee such, as I am perswaded it is) I partly can collect from my selfe, being intended to be wronged by his brother Hormisda, even in the selfesame maner, and on his marriage day, by taking faire Cassandra from me, the onely Jewell of my love and life. For the prevention of two such notorious injuries, I see that Fortune hath left us no other meanes, but onely the vertue of our courages, and the helpe of our right hands, by preparing our selves to Armes, opening a way to thee, by a second rape or stealth; and to me the first, for absolute possession of our divine Mistresses. Wherefore, if thou art desirous to recover thy losse, I will not onely pronounce liberty to thee (which I thinke thou dost little care for without her) but dare also assure thee to enjoy Iphigenia, so thou wilt assist me in mine enterprize, and follow me in my fortune, if the Gods do let them fall into our power.

You may well imagine, that Chynons dismayed soule was not a little cheared at these speeches; and therefore, without craving any long respit of time for answer, thus he replyed. Lord Lysimachus, in such a busines as this is, you cannot have a faster friend then my selfe, at least, if such good hap may betide me, as you have more then halfe promised: and therefore do no more but command what you would have to be effected by mee, and make no doubt of my courage in the execution: whereon Lysimachus made this answer. Know then Chynon (quoth he) that three dayes hence, these marriages are to bee celebrated in the houses of Pasimondo and Hormisda: upon which day, thou, thy friends, and my selfe (with some others, in whom I repose especiall trust) by the friendly favour of night, will enter into their houses, while they are in the middest of their Joviall feasting; and (seizing on the two Brides) beare them thence to a Shippe, which I will have lye in secret, waiting for our comming, and kill all such as shall presume to impeach us. This direction gave great contentment to Chynon, who remained still in prison, without revealing a word to his owne friends, untill the limited time was come.

Upon the Wedding day, performed with great and magnificent Triumph, there was not a corner in the Brethrens houses, but it sung joy in the highest key. Lysimachus, after he had ordred all things as they ought to be, and the houre for dispatch approached neere; hee made a division in three parts, of Chynon, his followers, and his owne friends, being all well armed under their outward habites. Having first used some encouraging speeches, for more resolute prosecution of the enterprize, hee sent one troope secretly to the Port, that they might not bee hindred of going aboord the ship, when the urgent necessity should require it. Passing with the other two traines of Pasimondo, he left the one at the doore, that such as were in the house, might not shut them up fast, and so impeach their passage forth. Then with Chynon, and the third band of Confederates, he ascended the staires up into the Hall, where he found the Brides with store of Ladies and Gentlewomen, all sitting in comely order at Supper. Rushing in roughly among the attendants, downe they threw the Tables, and each of them laying hold of his Mistris, delivered them into the hands of their followers, commanding that they should bee carried aboord the ship, for avoiding of further inconveniences.

This hurrie and amazement being in the house, the Brides weeping, the Ladies lamenting, and all the servants confusedly wondering; Chynon and Lysimachus (with their Friends) having their weapons drawn in their hands, made all opposers to give them way, and so gayned the stair head for their owne descending. There stood Pasimonda, with an huge long Staffe in his hand, to hinder their passage downe the stayres; but Chynon saluted him so soundly on the head, that it being cleft in twaine, he fell dead before his feete. His Brother Hormisda came to his rescue, and sped in the selfe-same manner as he had done; so did divers other beside, whom the companions to Lysimachus and Chynon, either slew out-right, or wounded.

So they left the house, filled with blood, teares, and outcries, going on together, without any hinderance, and so brought both the Brides aboord the ship, which they rowed away instantly with their Oares. For, now the shore was full of armed people, who came in rescue of the stolne Ladies: but all in vaine, because they were lanched into the main, and sayled on merrily towards Candye. Where being arrived, they were worthily entertained by honourable Friends and Kinsmen, who pacified all unkindnesses betweene them and their Mistresses: And, having accepted them in lawfull marriage, there they lived in no meane joy and contentment: albeit there was a long and troublesome difference (about these rapes) betweene Rhodes and Cyprus.

But yet in the end, by the meanes of Noble Friends and Kindred on either side, labouring to have such discontentment appeased, endangering warre betweene the Kingdomes: after a limited time of banishment, Chynon returned joyfully with his Iphigenia home to Cyprus, and Lysimachus with his beloved Cassandra unto Rhodes, each living in their severall Countries, with much felicity.

THE SECOND NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THE FIRME LOYALTIE OF A TRUE LOVER: AND HOW FORTUNE DOTH SOMETIME HUMBLE MEN, TO RAISE THEM AFTERWARD TO A FARRE HIGHER DEGREE.

FAIRE *Constance of Liparis, fell in love with Martuccio Gomito: and hearing that he was dead, desperately she entred into a Barke, which being transported by the windes to Susa in Barbary, from thence she went to Thunis, where she found him to be living. There she made her selfe knowne to him, and he being in great authority, as a privy Counsellor to the King: he married the saide Constance, and returned richly home with hir, to the Island of Liparis.*

WHEN the Queene perceived, that the Novell recited by Pamphilus was concluded, which she graced with especiall commendations: shee commanded Madam Æmilia, to take her turne as next in order; whereupon she thus began. Me thinkes it is a matter of equity, that every one should take delight in those things, whereby the recompence may be noted, answerable to their one affection. And because I rather desire to walke along by the paths of pleasure, then dwell on any ceremonious or scrupulous affectation, I shall the more gladly obey our Queene to day, then yesterday I did our melanchollly King.

Understand then (Noble Ladies) that neere to Sicily, there is a small Island, commonly called Liparis, wherein (not long since) lived a yong Damosell, named Constance, born of very sufficient parentage in the same Island. There dwelt also a yong man called Martuccio Gomito, of comely feature, well conditioned, and not unexpert in many vertuous qualities; affecting Constance in harty manner: and she so answerable to him in the same kinde, that to be in his company, was her onely felicity. Martuccio coveting to enjoy her in marriage, made his intent knowne to her Father: who upbraiding him with poverty, tolde him plainly that he should not have her. Martuccio greeving to see himselfe thus despised, because he was poore: made such good meanes, that he was provided of a small Barke; and calling such friends (as he thought fit) to his association, made a solemne vow, that he would never returne backe to Liparis, untill he was rich, and in better condition.

In the nature and course of a Rover or Pirate, so put thence to sea, coasting all about Barbarie, robbing and spoyling such as he met with; who were of no greater strength then himselfe: wherein Fortune was so favourable to him, that he became wealthy in a very short while. But as felicities are not alwayes permanent, so he and his followers, not contenting themselves with sufficient riches: by greedy seeking to get more, happened to be taken by certaine ships of the Sarazins, and so were robbed themselves of all that they had gotten, yet they resisted them stoutly a long while together, though it proved to the losse of many lives among them. When the Sarazens had sunke his ship in the Sea, they tooke him with them to Thunis, where he was imprisoned, and lived in extreamest misery.

Newes came to Liparis, not onely by one, but many more beside, that all those which departed thence in the small Barke with Martuccio, were drowned in the Sea, and not a man escaped. When Constance, heard these unwelcome tydings (who was exceeding full of greefe, for his so desperate departure) she wept and lamented extraordinarily, desiring now rather to dye, then live any longer. Yet she had not the heart, to lay any violent hand on her selfe, but rather to end her dayes by some new kinde of necessity. And departing privately from her Fathers house, she went to the Port or Haven, where (by chance) she found a small Fisher-boate, lying distant from the other vessels, the owners whereof being all gone on shore, and it well furnished with Masts, Sailes, and Oares, she entred into it; and putting forth the Oares, being somewhat skilfull in sayling, (as generally all the Women of that Island are) she so well guided the Sailes, Rudder, and Oares, that she was quickly farre off from the Land, and soly remained at the mercy of the windes. For thus she had resolved with her selfe, that the Boat being uncharged, and without a guide, would either be overwhelmed by the windes, or split in peeces against some Rocke; by which meanes she could [not] escape although she would, but (as it was her desire) must needs be drowned.

In this determination, wrapping a mantle about her head, and lying downe weeping in the boats bottome, she hourely expected her finall expiration: but it fell out otherwise, and contrary to her desperate intention, because the wind turning to the North, and blowing very gently, without disturbing the Seas a jot, they conducted the small Boat in such sort, that after the night of her entering into it, and the morrowes sailing untill the evening, it came within an hundre leagues of Thunis and to a strond neere a Towne called Susa. The young Damosell knew not whether she were on the sea or land; as one, who not by any accident hapning, lifted up her head to looke about her, neither intended ever to doe. Now it came to passe, that as the boate was driven to the shore, a poore woman stood at the Sea side, washing certaine Fishermens Nets; and seeing the boate comming towards her under saile, without any person appearing in it, she wondred thereat not a little. It being close at the shore, and she thinking the Fishermen to be asleepe therein: stept boldly, and looked into the boate, where she saw not any body, but onely the poore distressed Damosell, whose sorrowes having brought her now into a sound sleepe, the woman gave many cals before she could awake her, which at the length she did, and looked very strangely about her.

The poore woman perceyving by her habite that she was a Christian, demanded of her (in speaking Latine) how it was possible for her, being all alone in the boate, to arrive there in this manner? When Constance, heard her speake the Latine tongue, she began to doubt, least some contrary winde had turned her backe to Liparis againe, and starting up sodainly, to looke with better advice about her, shee saw her selfe at Land: and not knowing the Countrey, demanded of the poore woman where she was? Daughter (quoth she) you are heere hard by Susa in Barbarie. Which Constance hearing, and plainly perceyving, that death had denied to end her miseries, fearing least she should receive some dishonour, in such a barbarous unkinde Country, and not knowing what should now become of her, shee sate downe by the boates side, wringing her hands, and weeping bitterly.

The good Woman did greatly compassionate her case, and prevailed so well by gentle speeches, that she conducted her into her owne poore habitation, where at length she understoode, by what meanes shee hapned thither so strangely. And perceyving her to be fasting, she set such homely bread as she had before her, a few small Fishes, and a Crewse of Water, praying her for to accept of that poore entertainment, which meere necessity compelled her to do, and shewed her selfe very thankefull for it.

Constance hearing that she spake the Latine language so well; desired to know what she was. Whereto the old woman thus answered: Gentlewoman (quoth she) I am of Trapanum, named Carapresa, and am a servant in this Countrey to certaine Christian Fishermen. The young Maiden (albeit she was very full of sorrow) hearing her name to be Carapresa, conceived it as a good augury to her selfe, and that she had heard the name before, although she knew not what occasion should move her thus to do. Now began her hopes to quicken againe, and yet she could not relie upon what ground; nor was she so desirous of death as before, but made more precious estimation of her life, and without any further declaration of her selfe or Countrey, she entreated the good woman (even for charities sake) to take pitty on her youth, and helpe her with such good advice, to prevent all injuries which might happen to her, in such a solitary wofull condition.

Carapresa having heard her request, like a good woman as she was, left Constance in her poore Cottage, and went hastily to leave her nets in safety: which being done, she returned backe againe, and covering Constance with her Mantle, led her on to Susa with her, where being arrived, the good woman began in this manner. Constance, I will bring thee to the house of a very worthy Sarazin Lady, to whom I have done many honest services, according as she pleased to command me. She is an ancient woman, full of charity, and to her I will commend thee as best I may, for I am well assured, that she will gladly entertaine thee, and use thee as if thou wert her own daughter. Now, let it be thy part, during thy time of remaining with her, to employ thy utmost diligence in pleasing her, by deserving and gaining her grace, till heaven shall blesse thee with better fortune: and as she promised, so she performed.

The Sarazine Lady, being well stept into yeares, upon the commendable speeches delivered by Carapresa, did the more seriously fasten her eye on Constance, and compassion provoking her to teares, she tooke her by the hand, and (in loving manner) kissed her fore-head. So she led her further into her house, where dwelt divers other women (but not one man) all exercising themselves in severall labours, as working in all sorts of silke, with Imbroideries of Gold and Silver, and sundry other excellent Arts beside, which in short time were very familiar to Constance, and so pleasing grew her behaviour to the old Lady, and all the rest beside; that they loved and delighted in her wonderfully, and (by little and little) she attained to the speaking of their language, although it were very harsh and difficult.

Constance continuing thus in the old Ladies service at Susa, and thought to be dead or lost in her owne Fathers house; it fortuned, that one reigning then as King of Thunis, who named himselfe Mariabdela: there was a young Lord of great birth, and very powerfull, who lived as then in Granada, and pleaded that the Kingdome of Thunis belonged to him. In which respect, he mustred together a mighty Army, and came to assault the King, as hoping to expell him. These newes comming to the eare of Martuccio Gomito, who spake the Barbarian Language perfectly; and hearing it reported, that the King of Thunis made no meane preparation for his owne defence: he conferred with one of his keepers, who had the custody of him, and the rest taken with him, saying: If (quoth he) I could have meanes to speake with the King, and he were pleased to allow of my counsell, I can enstruct him in such a course, as shall assure him to win the honor of the field. The Guard reported these speeches to his Master, who presently acquainted the King therewith, and Martuccio being sent for; he was commanded to speake his minde: Whereupon he began in this manner.

My gracious Lord, during the time that I have frequented your countrey, I have heedfully observed, that the Militarie Discipline used in your fights and battailes, dependeth more upon your Archers, then any other men imployed in your warre. And therefore, if it could be so ordered, that this kinde of Artillery may faile in your enemies Campe, and yours be sufficiently furnished therewith, you neede make no doubt of winning the battaile: whereto the King thus replyed. Doubtlesse, if such an act were possible to be done, it would give great hope of successefull prevailing. Sir, said Martuccio, if you please it may be done, and I can quickly resolve you how. Let the strings of your Archers Bowes be made more soft and gentle, then those which heretofore they have formerly used; and next, let the nockes of the Arrowes be so provided, as not to receive any other, then those pliant gentle strings. But this must be done so secretly, that your enemies may have no knowledge thereof, least they should provide themselves in the same manner. Now the reason (Gracious Lord) why thus I counsell you, is to this end. When the Archers on the Enemies side have shot their Arrowes at your men, and yours in the like maner at them: it followeth, that (upon meere constraint) they must gather up your Arrowes, to shoote them backe againe at you, for so long while as the battell endureth, as no doubt but your men wil do the like to them. But your enemies will finde themselves much deceived, because they can make no use of your peoples Arrowes, in regard that the nockes are too narrow to receive their boystrous strings. Which will fall out contrary with your followers, for the pliant strings belonging to your Bowes, are as apt for their enemies great nockt Arrowes, as their owne, and so they shall have free use of both, reserving them in plentifull store, when your adversaries must stand unfurnished of any, but them that they cannot any way use.

This counsell pleased the King very highly, and he being a Prince of great understanding, gave order to have it accordingly followed, and thereby valiantly vanquished his enemies. Heereupon, Martuccio came to be great in his grace, as also consequently rich, and seated in no meane place of authority. Now as worthy and commendable actions are soone spread abroad, in honor of the man by whom they hapned: even so the fame of this rare got victory, was quickly noysed throughout the Countrey, and came to the hearing of poore Constance, that Martuccio Gomito (whom she supposed so long since to be dead) was living, and in honourable condition. The love which formerly she bare unto him, being not altogether extinct in her heart; of a small sparke, brake forth into a sodaine flame, and so encreased day by day, that her hope (being before almost quite dead) revived againe in chearfull manner.

Having imparted all her fortunes to the good old Lady with whom she dwelt; she told her beside, that she had an earnest desire to see Thunis, to satisfie her eyes as well as her eares, concerning the rumor blazed abroad. The good old Lady commended her desire, and (even as if she had bene her Mother) tooke her with her aboord a Barke, and so sayled thence to Thunis, where both she and Constance found honourable welcome, in the house of a kinsman to the Sarazin Lady. Carapresa also went along with them thither, and her they sent abroad into the City, to understand the newes of Martuccio Gomito. After they knew for a certainty that he was living, and in great authority about the King, according as the former report went of him. Then the good old Lady, being desirous to let Martuccio know, that his faire friend Constance was come thither to see him; went her selfe to the place of his abiding, and spake unto him in this manner. Noble Martuccio, there is a servant of thine in my house, which came from Liparis, and requireth to have a little private conference with thee: but because I durst not trust any other with the message, my selfe (at her entreaty) am come to acquaint thee therewith. Martuccio gave her kinde and hearty thankes, and then went along with her to the house.

No sooner did Constance behold him, but she was ready to dye with conceite of joy, and being unable to containe her passion: sodainely she threw her armes about his necke, and in meere compassion of her many misfortunes, as also the instant solace of her soule (not being able to utter one word) the teares trickled abundantly downe her cheekes. Martuccio also seeing his faire friend, was overcome with exceeding admiration, and stood awhile, as not knowing what to say; till venting forth a vehement sighe, thus he spake. My deerest love Constance! Art thou yet living? It is a tedious long while since I heard thou wast lost, and never any tydings knowne of thee in thine owne Fathers house. With which words, the teares standing in his eyes, most lovingly he embraced her, Constance recounted to him all her fortunes, and what kindnesse she had receyved from the Sarazine Lady, since her first houre of comming to her. And after much other discourse passing betweene them, Martuccio departed from her, and returning to the King his master, tolde him all the history of his fortunes, and those beside of his Love Constance, being purposely minded (with his gracious liking) to marry her according to the Christian Law.

The King was much amazed at so many strange accidents, and sending for Constance to come before him; from her owne mouth he heard the whole relation of her continued affection to Martuccio, whereupon hee saide. Now trust me faire Damosell, thou hast dearely deserved him to be thy husband. Then sending for very costly Jewels, and rich presents, the one halfe of them he gave to her, and the other to Martuccio, graunting them license withall, to marry according to their owne mindes.

Martuccio did many honors, and gave great gifts to the aged Sarazine Lady, with whom Constance had lived so kindly respected: which although she had no neede of, neither ever expected any such rewarding; yet (conquered by their urgent importunity, especially Constance, who could not be thankfull enough to her) she was enforced to receive them, and taking her leave of them weeping, sayled backe againe to Susa.

Within a short while after, the King licensing their departure thence, they entred into a small Barke, and Carapresa with them, sailing on with prosperous gales of winde, untill they arrived at Liparis, where they were entertained with generall rejoycing. And because their marriage was not sufficiently performed at Thunis, in regard of divers Christian ceremonies there wanting, their Nuptials were againe most honourably solemnized, and they lived (many yeares after) in health and much happinesse.

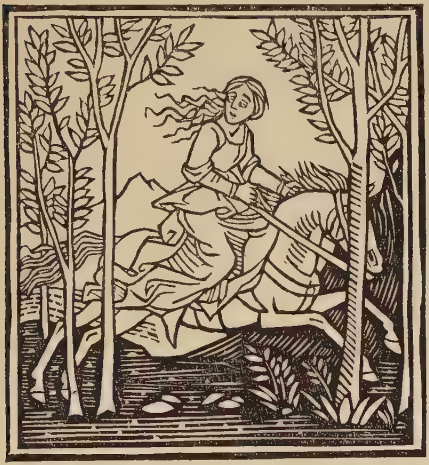
THE THIRD NOVELL

WHEREIN, THE SEVERALL POWERS BOTH OF LOVE AND FORTUNE, IS MORE AT LARGE APPROVED.

Pedro *Bocamazzo, escaping away with a yong Damosell which he loved, named Angelina, met with Theeves in his journey. The Damosell flying fearfully into a Forrest, by chance arriveth at a Castle. Pedro being taken by the Theeves, and happening afterward to escape from them; commeth (accidentally) to the same Castle where Angelina was. And marrying her, they then returned home to Rome.*

THERE was not any one in the whole company, but much commended the Novell reported by Madam Æmilia, and when the Queene perceived it was ended, she turned towards Madam Eliza, commanding her to continue on their delightfull exercise: whereto she declaring her willing obedience, began to speake thus. Courteous Ladies, I remember one unfortunate night, which happened to two Lovers, that were not indued with the greatest discretion. But because they had very many faire and happy dayes afterwards, I am the more willing for to let you heare it.

In the City of Rome, which (in times past) was called the Lady and Mistresse of the world, though now scarsely so good as the waiting maid: there dwelt sometime a yong Gentleman, named Pedro Boccamazzo, descended from one of the most honorable families in Rome, who was much enamoured of a beautifull Gentlewoman, called Angelina, Daughter to one named Gigliuozzo Saullo, whose fortunes were none of the fairest, yet he greatly esteemed among the Romanes. The entercourse of love betweene these twaine, had so equally enstructed their hearts and soule, that it could hardly be judged which of them was the more fervent in affection. But he, not being inured to such oppressing passions, and therefore the lesse able to support them, except he were sure to compasse his desire, plainly made the motion, that he might enjoy her in honourable mariage. Which his parents and friends hearing, they went to conferre with him, blaming him with over-much basenesse, so farre to disgrace himselfe and his stocke. Beside, they advised the Father to the Maid, neither to credit what Pedro saide in this case, or to live in hope of any such match, because they all did wholly despise it.



Pedro perceiving, that the way was shut up, whereby (and none other) he was to mount the Ladder of his hopes; began to wax weary of longer living: and if he could have won her fathers consent, he would have maried her in the despight of all his friends. Neverthelesse, he had a conceit hammering in his head, which if the maid would bee as forward as himselfe, should bring the matter to full effect. Letters and secret intelligences passing still betweene, at length he understood her ready resolution, to adventure with him thorough all fortunes whatsoever, concluding on their sodaine and secret flight from Rome. For which Pedro did so well provide, that very early in a morning, and well mounted on horsebacke, they tooke the way leading unto Alagna, where Pedro had some honest friends, in whom he reposed especiall trust. Riding on thus thorow the countrey, having no leysure to accomplish their marriage, because they stood in feare of pursuite: they were ridden above foure leagues from Rome, still shortning the way with their amorous discoursing.

It fortuned, that Pedro having no certaine knowledge of the way, but following a trackt guiding too farre on the left hand; rode quite out of course, and came at last within sight of a small Castle, out of which (before they were aware) yssued twelve Villaines, whom Angelina sooner espyed, then Pedro could do; which made her cry out to him, saying: Helpe deere Love to save us, or else we shall be assayled. Pedro then turning his horse so expeditiously as he could, and giving him the spurres as need required; mainly he gallopped into a neere adjoyning Forrest, more minding the following of Angelina, then any direction of his way, or them that endeavoured to bee his hindrance. So that by often winding and turning about, as the passage appeared troublesome to him, when he thought him selfe free and furthest from them, he was round engirt, and seized on by them. When they had made him to dismount from his horse, questioning him of whence and what he was, and he resolving them therein, they fell into a secret consultation, saying thus among themselves. This man is a friend to our deadly enemies, how can wee then otherwise dispose of him, but dreame him of all he hath, and in despight of the Orsini (men in nature hatefull to us) hang him up heere on one of these Trees?

All of them agreeing in this dismall resolution, they commanded Pedro to put off his garments, which he yeelding to do (albeit unwillingly) it so fell out, that five and twenty other theeves, came sodainly rushing in upon them, crying, Kill, kill, and spare not a man.

They which before had surprized Pedro, desiring now to shift for their owne safetie, left him standing quaking in his shirt, and so ranne away mainely to defend themselves. Which the new crew perceyving, and that their number farre exceeded the other: they followed to robbe them of what they had gotten, accounting it as a present purchase for them. Which when Pedro perceyved, and saw none tarrying to prey uppon him; hee put on his cloathes againe, and mounting on his owne Horse, gallopped that way, which Angelina before had taken: yet could he not descry any tracke or path, or so much as the footing of a Horse; but thought himselfe in sufficient security, being rid of them that first seized on him, and also of the rest, which followed in the pursuite of them.

For the losse of his beloved Angelina, he was the most wofull man in the world, wandering one while this way, and then againe another, calling for her all about the Forrest, without any answere returning to him. And not daring to ride backe againe, on he travailed still, not knowing where to make his arrivall. And having formerly heard of savage ravenous beasts, which commonly live in such unfrequented Forrests: he not onely was in feare of loosing his owne life, but also despayred much for his Angelina, least some Lyon or Woolfe, had torne her body in peeces.

Thus rode on poore unfortunate Pedro, untill the breake of day appeared, not finding any meanes to get forth of the Forrest, still crying and calling for his fayre friend, riding many times backeward, when as hee thought hee rode forward, untill hee became so weake and faint, what with extreame feare, lowd calling, and continuing so long awhile without any sustenance, that the whole day being thus spent in vaine, and darke night sodainly come uppon him, he was not able to hold out any longer.

Now was he in farre worse case then before, not knowing where, or how to dispose of himselfe, or what might best be done in so great a necessity. From his Horse he alighted, and tying him by the bridle unto a great tree, uppe he climbed into the same Tree, fearing to be devoured (in the night time) by some wilde beast, choosing rather to let his Horse perish, then himselfe. Within a while after, the Moone beganne to rise, and the skies appeared bright and cleare: yet durst hee not nod, or take a nap, least he should fall out of the tree; but sate still greeving, sighing, and mourning, desparing of ever seeing his Angelina any more, for he could not be comforted by the smallest hopefull perswasion, that any good Fortune might befall her in such a desolate Forrest, where nothing but dismall feares was to be expected, and no likelihood that she should escape with life.

Now, concerning poore affrighted Angelina, who (as you heard before) knew not any place of refuge to flye unto: but even as it pleased the horse to carry her:

she entred so farre into the Forrest, that she could not devise where to seeke her owne safety. And therefore, even as it fared with her friend Pedro, in the same manner did it fall out with her, wandering the whole night, and all the day following, one while taking one hopefull tracke, and then another, calling, weeping, wringing her hands, and greevously complaining of her hard fortune. At the length, perceiving that Pedro came not to her at all, she found a little path (which she lighted on by great good fortune) even when dark night was apace drawing, and followed it so long, till it brought her within the sight of a small poore Cottage, whereto she rode on so fast as she could; and found therin a very old man, having a wife rather more aged then he, who seeing her to be without company, the old man spake thus unto her.

Faire Daughter (quoth he) whether wander you at such an unseasonable houre, and all alone in a place so desolate? The Damosell weeping, replied; that she had lost her company in the Forrest, and enquired how neere shee was to Alagna. Daughter (answered the old man) this is not the way to Alagna, for it is above six leagues hence. Then shee desired to know, how farre off she was from such houses, where she might have any reasonable lodging? There are none so neere, said the old man, that day light will give you leave to reach. May it please you then good Father (replied Angelina) seeing I cannot travaile any whether else; for Gods sake, to let me remaine heere with you this night. Daughter answered the good old man, we can gladly give you entertainement here, for this night, in such poore manner as you see: but let mee tell you withall, that up and downe these woods (as well by night as day) walke companies of all conditions, and rather enemies then friends, who do us many greevous displeasures and harmes. Now if by misfortune, you being here, any such people should come, and seeing you so lovely faire, as indeed you are, offer you any shame or injurie: Alas you see, it lies not in our power to lend you any help or succour. I thought it good (therefore) to acquaint you heerewith, because if any such mischance do happen, you should not afterward complaine of us.

The yong Maiden, seeing the time to be so farre spent, albeit the old mans words did much dismay her, yet she thus replyed. If it be the will of heaven, both you and I shall be defended from any misfortune: but if any such mischance do happen, I account the meanes lesse deserving grief, if I fall into the mercy of men, then to be devoured by wild beasts in this Forrest. So, being dismounted from her horse, and entred into the homely house; shee supt poorely with the old man and his wife, with such meane cates as their provision affoorded: and after supper, lay downe in her garments on the same poore pallet, where the aged couple tooke their rest, and was very well contented therewith, albeit she could not refraine from sighing and weeping, to be thus divided from her deare Pedro, of whose life and welfare she greatly despaired.

When it was almost day, she heard a great noise of people travailing by, whereupon sodainly she arose, and ranne into a Garden plot, which was on the backside of the poore Cottage, espying in one of the corners a great stacke of Hay, wherein she hid her selfe, to the end, that travelling strangers might not readily finde her there in the house. Scarsely was she fully hidden, but a great company of Theeves and Villaines, finding the doore open, rushed into the Cottage, where looking round about them for some booty, they saw the Damosels horse stand ready sadled, which made them demand to whom it belonged. The good old man, not seeing the Maiden present there, but immagining that she had made some shift for her selfe, answered thus. Gentlemen, there is no body here but my wife and my selfe: as for this Horse, which seemeth to be escaped from the Owner; hee came hither yesternight, and we gave him house-roome heere, rather then to be devoured by Wolves abroad. Then said the principall of the Theevish crew: This horse shall be ours, in regard he hath no other Master, and let the owner come claime him of us.

When they had searched every corner of the poore Cottage, and found no such prey as they looked for, some of them went into the backeside; where they had left their Javelins and Targets, wherwith they used commonly to travaile. It fortuned, that one of them, being more subtily suspitious then the rest, thrust his Javelin into the stacke of Hay, in the very same place where the Damosell lay hidden, missing very little of killing her; for it entred so farre, that the iron head pierced quite thorough her Garments, and touched her left bare brest: whereupon, shee was ready to cry out, as fearing that she was wounded: but considering the place where she was, she lay still, and spake not a word. This disordered company, after they had fed on some young Kids, and other flesh which they brought with them thither, they went thence about their theeving exercise, taking the Damosels horse along with them.

After they were gone a good distance off, the good old man began thus to question his Wife. What is become of (quoth hee) our young Gentlewoman, which came so late to us yesternight? I have not seen her to day since our arising. The old woman made answer, that she knew not where she was, and sought all about to finde her. Angelinaes feares being well over-blowne, and hearing none of the former noise, which made her the better hope of their departure, came forth of the Hay-stack; wherof the good old man was not a little joyfull, and because she had so well escaped from them: so seeing it was now broad day-light, he said unto her. Now that the morning is so fairely begun, if you can be so well contented, we will bring you to a Castle, which stands about two miles and an halfe hence, where you will be sure to remaine in safety. But you must needs travaile thither on foot, because the nightwalkers that happened hither, have taken away your horse with them.

Angelina making little or no account of such a losse, entreated them for charities sake, to conduct her to that Castle, which accordingly they did, and arrived there betweene seven and eight of the clock. The Castle belonged to one of the Orsini, being called, Liello di Campo di Fiore, and by great good fortune, his wife was then there, she being a very vertuous and religious Lady. No sooner did she looke upon Angelina, but she knew her immediately, and entertaining her very willingly, requested, to know the reason of her thus arriving there: which she at large related, and moved the Lady (who likewise knew Pedro perfectly well) to much compassion, because he was a kinsman and deare friend to her Husband; and understanding how the Theeves had surprized him, she feared, that he was slaine among them, whereupon she spake thus to Angelina. Seeing you know not what is become of my kinsman Pedro, you shall remaine here with me, untill such time, as (if we heare no other tidings of him) you may with safety be sent backe to Rome.

Pedro all this while sitting in the Tree, so full of griefe, as no man could be more; about the houre of midnight (by the bright splendour of the Moone) espied about some twenty Wolves, who, so soone as they got a sight of the Horse, ran and engirt him round about. The Horse when he perceived them so neere him, drew his head so strongly back-ward, that breaking the reines of his bridle, he laboured to escape from them. But being beset on every side, and utterly unable to helpe himself, he contended with his teeth and feete in his owne defence, till they haled him violently to the ground, and tearing his body in pieces, left not a jot of him but the bare bones, and afterward ran ranging thorow the Forest. At this sight, poore Pedro was mightily dismaied, fearing to speed no better then his Horse had done, and therefore could not devise what was best to be done; for he saw no likelihood, of getting out of the Forest with life. But day-light drawing on apace, and he almost dead with cold, having stood quaking so long in the Tree; at length by continuall looking every where about him, to discerne the least glimpse of any comfort; he espied a great fire, which seemed to be about halfe a mile off from him.

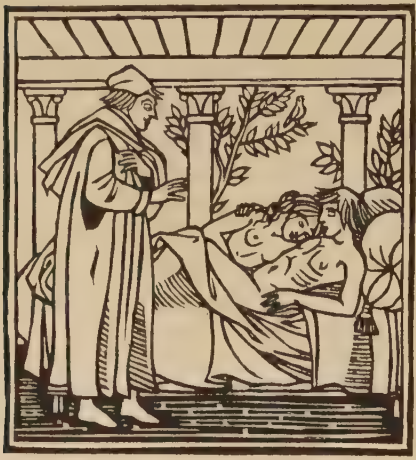
By this time it was broad day, when he descended downe out of the Tree, (yet not without much feare) and tooke his way towards the fire, where being arrived, he found a company of Shepheards banquetting about it, whom he curteously saluting, they tooke pity on his distresse, and welcommed him kindly. After he had tasted of such cheare as they had, and was indifferently refreshed by the good fire; he discoursed his hard disasters to them, as also how he happened thither, desiring to know, if any Village or Castle were neere there about, where he might in better manner releeve himselfe. The Shepheards told him, that about a mile and an halfe from thence, was the Castle of Signior Liello di Campo di Fiore, and that his Lady was residing there; which was no meane comfort to poore Pedro, requesting that one of them would accompany him thither, as two of them did in loving manner, to rid him of all further feares.

When he was arrived at the Castle, and found there divers of his familiar acquaintance: he laboured to procure some meanes, that the Damosell might bee sought for in the Forrest. Then the Lady calling for her, and bringing her to him; he ran and caught her in his armes, being ready to swoune with conceite of joy, for never could any man be more comforted, then he was at the sight of his Angelina, and questionlesse, her joy was not a jot inferiour to his, such a simpathy of firme love was settled betweene them. The Lady of the Castle, after she had given them very gracious entertainment, and understood the scope of their bold adventure; she reproved them both somewhat sharpely, for presuming so farre without the consent of their Parents. But perceiving (notwithstanding all her remonstrances) that they continued still constant in their resolution, without any inequality of either side; shee saide to her selfe. Why should this matter be any way offensive to me? They love each other loyally; they are not inferiour to one another in birth, but in fortune; they are equally loved and allied to my Husband, and their desire is both honest and honorable. Moreover, what know I, if it be the will of Heaven to have it so? Theeves intended to hang him, in malice to his name and kinred, from which hard fate he hath happily escaped. Her life was endangered by a sharpe pointed Javeline, and yet her fairer starres would not suffer her so to perish: beside, they have both escaped the fury of ravenous wild beasts; and all these are apparant signes, that future comforts should recompence former passed misfortunes; farre be it therefore from me, to hinder the appointment of the Heavens.

Then turning her selfe to them, thus she proceeded. If your desire be to joyne in honourable marriage, I am well contented therewith, and your nuptials shall here be solemnized at my Husbands charges. Afterward both he and I will endeavour, to make peace betweene you and your discontented Parents. Pedro was not a little joyfull at her kinde offer, and Angelina much more then he; so they were married together in the Castle, and worthily feasted by the Lady, as Forrest entertainment could permit, and there they enjoyed the first fruits of their love. Within a short while after, the Lady and they (well mounted on Horsebacke, and attended with an honourable traine) returned to Rome; where her Lord

Liello and she prevailed so well with Pedroes angry Parents: that the variance ended in love and peace, and afterward they lived lovingly together, till old age made them as honourable, as their true and mutuall affection formerly had done.

THE FOURTH NOVELL



DECLARING THE DISCREETE PROVIDENCE OF PARENTS, IN CARE OF THEIR CHILDRENS LOVE AND THEIR OWNE CREDIT, TO CUT OFF INCONVENIENCES, BEFORE THEY DO PROCEEDE TOO FARRE.

RICCIARDO *Manardy, was found by Messer Lizio da Valbonna, as he sate fast asleepe at his Daughters Chamber window, having his hand fast in hers, and she sleeping in the same manner. Whereupon, they are joyned together in marriage, and their long loyall love mutually recompenced.*

MADAM Eliza having ended her Tale, and heard what commendations the whole company gave thereof; the Queene commanded Philostratus, to tell a Novell agreeing with his owne minde, who smiling thereat, thus replyed. Faire Ladies, I have bene so often checkt and snapt, for my yesterdayes matter and argument of discoursing, which was both tedious and offensive to you; that if I intended to make you any amends, I should now undertake to tell such a Tale, as might put you into a mirthfull humour. Which I am determined to do, in relating a briefe and pleasant Novell, not any way offensive (as I trust) but exemplary for some good notes of observation.

Not long since, there lived in Romania, a Knight, a very honest Gentleman, and well qualified, whose name was Messer Lizio da Valbonna, to whom it fortuned, that (at his entrance into age) by his Lady and wife, called Jaquemina, he had a Daughter, the very choycest and goodliest gentlewoman in all those places. Now because such a happy blessing (in their olde yeeres) was not a little comfortable to them; they thought themselves the more bound in duty, to be circumspect of her education, by keeping her out of over-frequent companies, but onely such as agreed best with their gravity, and might give the least ill example to their Daughter, who was named Catharina; as making no doubt, but by this their provident and wary respect, to match her in marriage answerable to their liking. There was also a yong Gentleman, in the very flourishing estate of his youthfull time, descended from the Family of the Manardy da Brettinoro, named Messer Ricciardo, who oftentimes frequented the House of Messer Lizio, and was a continuall welcome guest to his Table, Messer Lizio and his wife making the like account of him, even as if hee [had] bene their owne Sonne.

This young Gallant, perceiving the Maiden to be very beautifull, of singular behaviour, and of such yeeres as was fit for marriage, became exceeding enamoured of her, yet concealed his affection so closely as he could, which was not so covertly carried, but that she perceived it, and grew into as good liking of him. Many times he had an earnest desire to have conference with her, which yet still he deferred, as fearing to displease her; at the length he lighted on an apt opportunity, and boldly spake to her in this manner. Faire Catharina, I hope thou wilt not let me die for thy love? Signior Ricciardo (replyed she suddenly againe) I hope you will extend the like mercy to me, as you desire that I should shew to you. This answere was so pleasing to Messer Ricciardo, that presently he saide. Alas deare Love, I have dedicated all my fairest fortunes onely to thy service, so that it remaineth soly in thy power, to dispose of me as best shall please thee, and to appoint such times of private conversation, as may yeeld more comfort to my poore afflicted soule.

Catharina standing musing awhile, at last returned him this answere. Signior Ricciardo, quoth she, you see what a restraint is set on my liberty, how short I am kept from conversing with any one, that I hold this our enterparlance now almost miraculous. But if you could devise any convenient meanes, to admit us more familiar freedome, without any prejudice to mine honour, or the least distaste to my Parents; do but enstruct it, and I will adventure it. Ricciardo having considered on many wayes and meanes, thought one to be the fittest of all; and therefore thus replyed. Catharina (quoth he) the onely place for our more private talking together, I conceive to be the Gallery over your Fathers Garden. If you can winne your Mother to let you lodge there, I will make meanes to climbe over the wall, and at the goodly gazing window, we may discourse so long as we please. Now trust me deare Love (answered Catharina) no place can be more convenient for our purpose, there shall we heare the sweete Birds sing, especially the Nightingale, which I have heard singing there all the night long; I will breake the matter to my Mother, and how I speede, you shall heare further from me. So, with divers parting kisses, they brake off conference, till their next meeting.

On the day following, which was towards the ending of the moneth of May, Catharina began to complaine to her Mother, that the season was over-hot and tedious, to be still lodged in her Mothers Chamber, because it was an hinderance to her sleeping; and wanting rest, it would be an empairing of her health. Why Daughter (quoth the Mother) the weather (as yet) is not so hot, but (in my minde) you may very well endure it. Alas Mother, saide she, aged people, as you and my Father are, do not feele the heates of youthfull blood, by reason of your farre colder complexion, which is not to be measured by younger yeeres. I know that well Daughter, replyed the Mother; but is it in my power, to make the weather warme or coole, as thou perhaps wouldst have it? Seasons are to be suffered, according to their severall qualities; and though the last night might seeme hot, this next ensuing may be cooler, and then thy rest will be the better. No Mother, quoth Catharina, that cannot be; for as Summer proceedeth on, so the heate encreaseth, and no expectation can be of temperate weather, untill it groweth to Winter againe. Why Daughter, saide the Mother, what wouldest thou have me to do? Mother (quoth she) if it might stand with my Fathers good liking and yours, I would be spared from the Garden Gallery, which is a great deale more coole lodged. There shall I heare the sweete Nightingale sing, as every night she useth to do, and many other pretty Birdes beside, which I cannot do lodging in your Chamber.

The Mother loving her Daughter dearely, as being somewhat over-fond of her, and very willing to give her contentment; promised to impart her minde to her Father, not doubting but to compasse what shee requested. When she had mooved the matter to Messer Lizio whose age made him somewhat froward and teasty; angerly said to his wife. Why how now woman? Cannot our Daughter sleepe, except she heare the Nightingale sing? Let there be a bed made for her in the Oven, and there let the Crickets make her melody. When Catharina heard this answere from her Father, and saw her desire to be disappointed; not onely could she take any rest the night following, but also complained more of the heate then before, not suffering her Mother to take any rest, which made her go angerly to her Husband in the morning, saying. Why Husband, have we but one onely Daughter, whom you pretend to love right dearly, and yet can you be so carelesse of her, as to denie her a request, which is no more then reason? What matter is it to you or me, to let her lodge in the Garden Gallery? Is her young blood to be compared with ours? Can our weake and crazie bodies, feele the frolicke temper of hers? Alas, she is hardly (as yet) out of her childish yeeres, and Children have many desires farre differing from ours: the singing of Birdes is rare musicke to them, and chiefly the Nightingale; whose sweete notes will provoke them to rest, when neither Art or Physicke can do it.

Is it even so Wife? answered Messer Lizio. Must your will and mine be governed by our Daughter? Well be it so then, let her bed be made in the Garden Gallerie, but I will have the keeping of the key, both to locke her in at night, and set her at liberty every morning. Woman, woman, yong wenches are wily, many wanton crotchets are busie in their braines, and to us that are aged, they sing like Lapwings, telling us one thing, and intending another; talking of Nightingales, when their mindes run on Cocke-Sparrowes. Seeing Wife, she must needes have her minde, let yet your care and mine extend so farre, to keepe her chastity uncorrupted, and our credulity from being abused. Catharina having thus prevailed with her Mother, her bed made in the Garden Gallerie, and secret intelligence given to Ricciardo, for preparing his meanes of accesse to her window; old provident Lizio lockes the doore to bed-ward, and gives her liberty to come forth in the morning, for his owne lodging was neere to the same Gallery.

In the dead and silent time of night, when all (but Lovers) take their rest; Ricciardo having provided a Ladder of Ropes, with grapling hookes to take hold above and below, according as he had occasion to use it. By helpe thereof, first he mounted over the Garden wall, and then climbde up to the Gallery window, before which (as is every where in Italie) was a little round engirting Tarras, onely for a man to stand upon, for making cleane the window, or otherwise repairing it. Many nights (in this manner) enjoyed they their meetings, entermixing their amorous conference with infinite kisses and kinde embraces, as the window gave leave, he sitting in the Tarras, and departing alwayes before breake of day, for feare of being discovered by any.

But, as excesse of delight is the Nurse to negligence, and begetteth such an over-presuming boldnesse, as afterward proveth to be sauced with repentance: so came it to passe with our over-fond Lovers, in being taken tardy through their owne folly. After they had many times met in this manner, the nights (according to the season) growing shorter and shorter, which their stolne delight made them lesse respective of, then was requisite in an adventure so dangerous: it fortuned, that their amorous pleasure had so farre transported them, and dulled their senses in such sort, by these their continuall nightly watchings; that they both fell fast asleepe, he having his hand closed in hers, and she one arme folded about his body, and thus they slept till broade day light. Old Messer Lizio, who continually was the morning Cocke to the whole House, going foorth into his Garden, saw how his Daughter and Ricciardo were seated at the window. In he went againe, and going to his wives Chamber, saide to her. Rise quickly wife, and you shall see, what made your Daughter so desirous to lodge in the Garden Gallery. I perceive that shee loved to heare the Nightingale, for she hath caught one, and holds him fast in her hand. Is it possible, saide the Mother, that our Daughter should catch a live Nightingale in the darke? You shall see that your selfe, answered Messer Lizio, if you will make hast, and go with me.

She, putting on her garments in great haste, followed her Husband, and being come to the Gallery doore, he opened it very softly, and going to the window, shewed her how they both sate fast asleepe, and in such manner as hath bene before declared: whereupon, shee perceiving how Ricciardo and Catharina had both deceived her, would have made an outcry, but that Messer Lizio spake thus to her. Wife, as you love me, speake not a word, neither make any noyse: for, seeing shee hath loved Ricciardo without our knowledge, and they have had their private meetings in this manner, yet free from any blamefull imputation; he shall enjoy her, and she him. Ricciardo is a Gentleman, well derived, and of rich possessions, it can be no disparagement to us, that Catharina match with him in mariage, which he neither shall, or dare deny to do, in regard of our Lawes severity; for climbing up to my window with his Ladder of Ropes, whereby his life is forfeited to the Law, except our Daughter please to spare it, as it remaineth in her power to doe, by accepting him as her husband, or yeelding his life up to the Law, which surely she will not suffer, their love agreeing together in such mutuall manner, and he adventuring so dangerously for her.

Madam Jaquemina, perceiving that her husband spake very reasonably, and was no more offended at the matter; stept aside with him behinde the drawne Curtaines, untill they should awake of themselves. At the last, Ricciardo awaked, and seeing it was so farre in the day, thought himselfe halfe dead, and calling to Catharina, saide. Alas deare Love! what shall we doe? we have slept too long, and shall be taken here. At which words, Messer Lizio stept forth from behind the Curtaines, saying. Nay, Signior Ricciardo, seeing you have found such an unbefitting way hither, we will provide you a better for your backe returning. When Ricciardo saw the Father and Mother both there present, he could not devise what to do or say, his senses became so strangely confounded; yet knowing how hainously he had offended, if the strictnesse of Law should bee challenged against him, falling on his knees, he saide. Alas Messer Lizio, I humbly crave your mercy, confessing my selfe well worthy of death, that knowing the sharpe rigour of the Law, I would presume so audaciously to breake it. But pardon me worthy Sir, my loyall and unfeigned love to your Daughter Catharina, hath bene the only cause of my transgressing.

Ricciardo (replied Messer Lizio) the love I beare thee, and the honest confidence I do repose in thee, step up (in some measure) to plead thine excuse, especially in the regard of my Daughter, whom I blame thee not for loving, but for this unlawfull way of presuming to her. Neverthelesse, perceiving how the case now standeth, and considering withall, that youth and affection were the ground of thine offence: to free thee from death, and my selfe from dishonour, before thou departest hence, thou shalt espouse my Daughter Catharina, to make her thy lawfull wife in marriage, and wipe off all scandall to my House and me. All this while was poore Catharina on her knees likewise to her Mother, who (notwithstanding this her bold adventure) made earnest suite to her Husband to remit all, because Ricciardo right gladly condiscended, as it being the maine issue of his hope and desire; to accept his Catharina in marriage, whereto she was as willing as he. Messer Lizio presently called for the Confessour of his House, and borrowing one of his Wives Rings, before they went out of the Gallery; Ricciardo and Catharina were espoused together, to their no little joy and contentment.

Now had they more leasure for further conference, with the Parents and kindred to Ricciardo, who being no way discontented with this sudden match, but applauding it in the highest degree; they were publikely maried againe in the Cathedrall Church, and very honourable triumphes performed at the nuptials, living long after in happy prosperity.

THE FIFTH NOVELL

WHEREIN MAY BE OBSERVED, WHAT QUARRELS AND CONTENTIONS ARE OCCASIONED BY LOVE; WITH SOME PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION, CONCERNING THE SINCERITY OF A LOYALL FRIEND.

GUIDOTTO *of Cremona, departing out of this mortall life, left a Daughter of his, with Jacomino of Pavia. Giovanni di Severino, and Menghino da Minghole, fell both in love with the young Maiden, and fought for her; who being afterward knowne to be the Sister to Giovanni, she was given in mariage to Menghino.*

ALL the Ladies laughing heartily, at the Novell of the Nightingale, so pleasingly delivered by Philostratus, when they saw the same to be fully ended, the Queene thus spake. Now trust me Philostratus, though yesterday you did much oppresse mee with melancholly, yet you have made me such an amends to day, as we have little reason to complaine any more of you. So converting her speech to Madam Neiphila, shee commanded her to succeede with her discourse, which willingly she yeelded to, beginning in this manner. Seing it pleased Philostratus, to produce his Novell out of Romania: I meane to walke with him in the same jurisdiction, concerning what I am to say.

There dwelt sometime in the City of Fano, two Lombards, the one being named Guidotto of Cremona, and the other Jacomino of Pavia, men of sufficient entrance into yeares, having followed the warres (as Souldiers) all their youthfull time. Guidotto feeling sicknesse to over-master him, and having no sonne, kinsman, or friend, in whom he might repose more trust, then he did in Jacomino: having long conference with him about his worldly affaires, and setled his whole estate in good order; he left a Daughter to his charge, about ten yeeres of age, with all such goods as he enjoyed, and then departed out of this life. It came to passe, that the City of Faenza, long time being molested with tedious warres, and subjected to very servile condition; beganne now to recover her former strength, with free permission (for all such as pleased) to returne and possesse their former dwellings. Whereupon, Jacomino (having sometime bene an inhabitant there) was desirous to live in Faenza againe, convaying thither all his goods, and taking with him also the young Girle, which Guidotto had left him, whom hee loved, and respected as his owne childe.

As shee grew in stature, so she did in beauty and vertuous qualities, as none was more commended throughout the whole City, for faire, civill, and honest demeanour, which incited many amorously to affect her. But (above all the rest) two very honest young men, of good fame and repute, who were so equally in love addicted to her, that being jealous of each others fortune, in preventing of their severall hopefull expectation; a deadly hatred grew suddenly betweene them, the one being named Giovanni de Severino, and the other Menghino de Minghole. Either of these two young men, before the Maide was fifteene yeeres old, laboured to be possessed of her in marriage, but her Guardian would give no consent thereto: wherefore, perceiving their honest intended meaning to be frustrated, they now began to busie their braines, how to forestall one another by craft and circumvention.

Jacomino had a Maide-servant belonging to his House, somewhat aged, and a Man-servant beside, named Grinello, of mirthfull disposition, and very friendly, with whom Giovanni grew in great familiarity, and when he found time fit for the purpose, he discovered his love to him, requesting his furtherance and assistance, in compassing the height of his desire, with bountifull promises of rich rewarding; whereto Grinello returned this answere. I know not how to sted you in this case, but when my Master shall sup foorth at some Neighbours house, to admit your entrance where shee is: because, if I offer to speake to her, she never will stay to heare mee. Wherefore, if my service this way may doe you any good, I promise to performe it; doe you beside, as you shall finde it most convenient for you. So the bargaine was agreed on betweene them, and nothing else now remained, but to what issue it should sort in the end.

Menghino, on the other side, having entred into the Chamber-maides acquaintance, sped so well with her, that she delivered so many messages from him, as had (already) halfe won the liking of the Virgin; passing further promises to him beside, of bringing him to have conference with her, whensoever her Master should be absent from home. Thus Menghino being favoured (on the one side) by the olde Chamber-maide, and Giovanni (on the other) by trusty Grinello; their amorous warre was now on foote, and diligently followed by both their sollicitors. Within a short while after, by the procurement of Grinello, Jacomino was invited by a Neighbour to supper, in company of divers his familiar friends, whereof intelligence being given to Giovanni; a conclusion passed betweene them, that (upon a certaine signale given) he should come, and finde the doore standing ready open, to give him all accesse unto the affected Mayden.

The appointed night being come, and neither of these hot Lovers knowing the others intent, but their suspition being alike, and encreasing still more and more; they made choyce of certaine friends and associates, well armed and provided, for eithers safer entrance when need should require. Menghino stayed with his troope, in a neere neighbouring house to the Mayden, attending when the signall would be given: but Giovanni and his consorts, were ambushed somewhat further off from the house, and both saw when Jacomino went foorth to supper. Now Grinello and the Chamber-maide began to vary, which should send the other out of the way, till they had effected their severall invention; wherupon Grinello said to her. What maketh thee to walke thus about the house, and why doest thou not get thee to bed? And thou (quoth the Maide) why doest thou not goe to attend on our Master, and tarry for his returning home? I am sure thou hast supt long agoe, and I know no businesse here in the house for thee to doe. Thus (by no meanes) the one could send away the other, but either remained as the others hinderance.

But Grinello remembring himselfe, that the houre of his appointment with Giovanni was come, he saide to himselfe. What care I whether our olde Maide be present, or no? If she disclose any thing that I doe, I can be revenged on her when I list. So, having made the signall, he went to open the doore, even when Giovanni (and two of his confederates) rushed into the House, and finding the faire young Maiden sitting in the Hall, laide hands on her, to beare her away. The Damosell began to resist them, crying out for helpe so loude as she could, as the olde Chamber-maide did the like: which Menghino hearing, he ranne thither presently with his friends, and seeing the young Damosell brought well-neere out of the House; they drew their Swords, crying out: Traytors, you are but dead men, here is no violence to be offered, neither is this a booty for such base groomes. So they layed about them lustily, and would not permit them to passe any further. On the other side, upon this mutinous noyse and outcry, the Neighbours came foorth of their houses, with lights, staves, and clubbes, greatly reproving them for this out-rage, yet assisting Menghino: by meanes whereof, after a long time of contention, Menghino recovered the Mayden from Giovanni, and placed her peaceably in Jacominoes House.

No sooner was this hurly burly somewhat calmed, but the Serjeants to the Captine of the City, came thither, and apprehended divers of the mutiners: among whom were Menghino, Giovanni, and Grinello, committing them immediately to prison. But after every thing was pacified, and Jacomino returned home to his house from supper; he was not a little offended at so grosse an injury. When he was fully informed, how the matter happened, and apparantly perceived, that no blame at all could be imposed on the Mayden: he grew the better contented, resolving with himselfe (because no more such inconveniences should happen) to have her married so soone as possibly he could.

When morning was come, the kindred and friends on either side, understanding the truth of the errour committed, and knowing beside, what punishment would be inflicted on the prisoners, if Jacomino pressed the matter no further, then as with reason and equity well he might; they repaired to him, and (in gentle speeches) entreated him, not to regard a wrong offered by unruly and youthfull people, meerely drawne into the action by perswasion of friends; submitting both themselves, and the offendors, to such satisfaction as [he] pleased to appoint them. Jacomino, who had seene and observed many things in his time, and was a man of sound understanding, returned them this answer.

Gentlemen, if I were in mine owne Country, as now I am in yours, I would as forwardly confesse my selfe your friend, as here I must needes fall short of any such service, but even as you shall please to command me. But plainely, and without all further ceremonious complement, I must agree to whatsoever you can request; as thinking you to be more injured by me, then any great wrong that I have sustained. Concerning the young Damosell remaining in my House, she is not (as many have imagined) either of Cremona, or Pavia, but borne a Faentine, here in this Citie: albeit neither my selfe, she, or he of whome I had her, did ever know it, or yet could learne whose Daughter she was. Wherefore, the suite you make to me, should rather (in duty) be mine to you: for shee is a native of your owne, doe right to her, and then you can doe no wrong unto mee.

When the Gentlemen understood, that the Mayden was borne in Faenza, they marvelled thereat, and after they had thanked Jacomino for his curteous answer; they desired him to let them know, by what meanes the Damosell came into his custody, and how he knew her to be borne in Faenza: when hee, perceiving them attentive to heare him, began in this manner.

Understand worthy Gentlemen, that Guidotto of Cremona, was my companion and deare friend, who growing neere to his death, tolde me that when this City was surprized by the Emperour Frederigo, and all things committed to sacke and spoile; he and certaine of his confederates entred into a House, which they found to bee well furnished with goods, but utterly forsaken of the dwellers, onely this poore Mayden excepted, being then aged but two yeeres, or thereabout. As hee mounted up the steps, with intent to depart from the House; she called him Father, which word moved him so compassionately, that he went backe againe, brought her away with him, and all things of worth which were in the House: going thence afterward to Fano, and there deceasing, hee left her and all his goods to my charge; conditionally, that I should see her married when due time required, and bestow on her the wealth which he had left her. Now, very true it is, although her yeeres are convenient for marriage, yet I could never finde any one to bestow her on, at least that I thought fitting for her: howbeit, I will listen thereto much more respectively, before any other such accident shall happen.

It came to passe, that in the reporting of this discourse, there was then a Gentleman in the company, named Guillemino da Medicina, who at the surprizall of the City, was present with Guidotto of Cremona, and knew well the House which he had ransacked, the owner whereof was also present with him, wherefore taking him aside, he said to him. Bernardino, hearest thou what Jacomino hath related? Yes very well, replyed Bernardino, and remember withall, that in that dismall bloody combustion, I lost a little Daughter, about the age as Jacomino speaketh. Questionlesse then replyed Guillemino, she must needs be the same young Mayden, for I was there at the same time, and in the House, whence Guidotto did bring both the Girle and goods, and I do perfectly remember, that it was thy House. I pray thee call to minde, if ever thou sawest any scarre or marke about her, which may revive thy former knowledge of her, for my minde perswades me, that the Maide is thy Daughter.

Bernardino musing awhile with himselfe, remembred, that under her left eare, she had a scarre, in the forme of a little crosse, which happened by the byting of a Wolfe, and but a small while before the spoyle was made. Wherefore, without deferring it to any further time, he stept to Jacomino (who as yet stayed there) and entreated him to fetch the Mayden from his house, because shee might be knowne to some in the company: whereto right willingly he condiscended, and there presented the Maide before them. So soone as Bernardino beheld her, he began to be much inwardly moved, for the perfect character of her Mothers countenance, was really figured in her sweete face; onely that her beauty was somewhat more excelling. Yet not herewith satisfied, he desired Jacomino to bee so pleased, as to lift up a little the lockes of haire, depending over her left eare. Jacomino did it presently, albeit with a modest blushing in the Maide, and Bernardino looking advisedly on it, knew it to be the selfe-same crosse, which confirmed her constantly to be his Daughter.

Overcome with excesse of joy, which made the teares to trickle downe his cheekes, he proffered to embrace and kisse the Maide: but she refusing his kindnesse, because (as yet) she knew no reason for it, hee turned himselfe to Jacomino, saying. My deare brother and friend, this Maide is my Daughter, and my House was the same which Guidotto spoyled, in the generall havocke of our City, and thence he carried this childe of mine, forgotten (in the fury) by my Wife her Mother. But happy was the houre of his becomming her Father, and carrying her away with him; for else she had perished in the fire, because the House was instantly burnt downe to the ground. The Mayden hearing his words, observing him also to be a man of yeeres and gravity: she beleeved what he saide, and humbly submitted her selfe to his kisses and embraces, even as instructed thereto by instinct of nature. Bernardino instantly sent for his wife, her owne Mother, his daughters, sonnes, and kindred, who being acquainted with this admirable accident, gave her most gracious and kinde welcome, he receiving her from Jacomino as his childe, and the legacies which Guidotto had left her.

When the Captaine of the City (being a very wise and worthy Gentleman) heard these tydings, and knowing that Giovanni, then his prisoner, was the Son to Bernardino, and naturall Brother to the newly recovered Maide: he bethought himselfe, how best he might qualifie the fault committed by him. And entring into the Hall among them, handled the matter so discreetly, that a loving league of peace was confirmed betweene Giovanni and Menghino, to whom (with free and full consent on all sides) the faire Maide, named Agatha, was given in marriage, with a more honourable enlargement of her dowry, and Grinello, with the rest, delivered out of prison, which for their tumultuous riot they had justly deserved. Menghino and Agatha had their wedding worthily solemnized, with all due honours belonging thereto; and long time after they had lived in Faenza, highly beloved, and graciously esteemed.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS MANIFESTED, THAT LOVE CAN LEADE A MAN INTO NUMBERLESSE PERILS: OUT OF WHICH HE ESCAPETH WITH NO MEANE DIFFICULTY.

Guion *di Procida, being found familiarly conversing with a young Damosell, which he loved; and had beene given (formerly) to Frederigo, King of Sicilie: was bound to a stake, to be consumed with fire. From which danger (neverthelesse) he escaped, being knowne by Don Rogiero de Oria, Lord Admirall of Sicilie, and afterward married the Damosell.*

The Novell of Madame Neiphila being ended, which proved very pleasing to the Ladies: the Queene commanded Madam Pampinea, that she should prepare to take her turne next, whereto willingly obeying, thus she began. Many and mighty (Gracious Ladies) are the prevailing powers of love, conducting amorous soules into infinite travels, with inconveniences no way avoidable, and not easily to be foreseene, or prevented. As partly already hath bene observed, by divers of our former Novels related, and some (no doubt) to ensue hereafter; for one of them (comming now to my memory) I shall acquaint you withall, in so good tearmes as I can.

Ischia is an Iland very neere to Naples, wherein (not long since) lived a faire and lovely Gentlewoman, named Restituta, Daughter to a Gentleman of the same Isle, whose name was Marino Bolgaro. A proper youth called Guion, dwelling also in a neere neighbouring Isle, called Procida, did love her as dearly as his owne life, and she was as intimately affected towards him. Now because the sight of her was his onely comfort, as occasion gave him leave, he resorted to Ischia very often in the day time, and as often also in the night season, when any Barke passed from Procida to Ischia; if to see nothing else, yet to behold the walles that enclosed his Mistresse thus.

While this love continued in equall fervency, it chanced upon a faire Summers day, that Restituta walked alone upon the Sea-shore, going from Rocke to Rocke, having a naked knife in her hand, wherewith she opened such Oysters as shee found among the stones, seeking for small pearles enclosed in their shelles. Her walke was very solitary and shady, with a faire Spring or Well adjoyning to it, and thither (at that very instant time) certaine Sicilian young Gentlemen, which came from Naples, had made their retreate. They perceiving the Gentlewoman to be very beautifull (she as yet not having any sight of them) and in such a silent place alone by her selfe: concluded together, to make a purchase of her, and carry her thence away with them; as indeed they did, notwithstanding all her out cryes and exclaimes, bearing her perforce aboard their Barke.

Setting sayle thence, they arrived in Calabria, and then there grew a great contention betweene them, to which of them this booty of beauty should belong, because each of them pleaded a title to her. But when they could not grow to any agreement, but doubted greater disasters would ensue thereon, by breaking their former league of friendship: by an equall conformity in consent, they resolved, to bestow her as a rich present, on Frederigo King of Sicilie, who was then young and joviall, and could not be pleased with a better gift; wherefore, they were no sooner landed at Palermo, but they did according as they had determined. The King did commend her beauty extraordinarily, and liked her farre beyond all his other Loves: but, being at that time empaired in his health, and his body much distempered by ill dyet; he gave command, that untill he should be in more able disposition, she must be kept in a goodly house of his owne, erected in a beautifull Garden, called the Cube, where she was attended in most pompous manner.

Now grew the noyse and rumor great in Ischia, about this rape or stealing away of Restituta; but the chiefest greevance of all, was, that it could not be knowne how, by whom, or by what meanes. But Guion di Procida, whom this injury concerned much more then any other: stood not in expectation of better tydings from Ischia, but hearing what course the Barke had taken, made ready another, to follow after with all possible speede. Flying thus on the winged winds through the Seas, even from Minerva, unto the Scalea in Calabria, searching for his lost Love in every angle: at length it was told him at the Scalea, that shee was carryed away by certaine Sicillian Marriners, to Palermo, whither Guion set sayle immediately.

After some diligent search made there, he understood, that she was delivered to the King, and he had given strict command, for keeping her in his place of pleasure, called the Cube: which newes were not a little greevous to him, for now he was almost quite out of hope, not onely of ever enjoying her, but also of seeing her. Neverthelesse, Love would not let him utterly despaire, whereupon he sent away his Barque, and perceiving himselfe to be unknowne of any; he continued for some time in Palermo, walking many times by that goodly place of pleasure. It chanced on a day, that keeping his walke as he used to do, Fortune was so favourable to him, as to let him have a sight of her at her window; from whence also she had a full view of him, to their exceeding comfort and contentment. And Guion observing, that the Cube was seated in a place of small resort; approached so neere as possibly he durst, to have some conference with Restituta.

As Love sets a keene edge on the dullest spirit, and (by a small advantage) makes a man the more adventurous: so this little time of unseene talke, inspired him with courage, and her with witty advice, by what meanes his accesse might be much neerer to her, and their communication concealed from any discovery, the scituation of the place, and benefit of time duly considered. Night must be the cloud to their amorous conclusion, and therefore, so much thereof being spent, as was thought convenient, he returned thither againe, provided of such grappling-yrons, as is required when men will clamber, made fast unto his hands and knees; by their helpe hee attained to the top of the wall, whence discending downe into the Garden, there he found the maine yard of a ship, whereof before she had given him instruction, and rearing it up against her Chamber window, made that his meanes for ascending thereto, she having left it open for his easier entrance.

You cannot denie (faire Ladies) but here was a very hopefull beginning, and likely to have as happy an ending, were it not true

Loves fatal misery, even in the very height of promised assurance, to be thwarted by unkind prevention, and in such manner as I will tell you. This night, intended for our Lovers meeting, proved disastrous and dreadfull to them both: for the King, who at the first sight of Restituta, was highly pleased with her excelling beauty; gave order to his Eunuches and other women, that a costly bathe should be prepared for her, and therein to let her weare away that night, because the next day he intended to visit her. Restituta being royally conducted from her Chamber to the Bathe, attended on with Torchlight, as if she had bene a Queene: none remained there behind, but such women as waited on her, and the Guards without, which watched the Chamber.

No sooner was poore Guion aloft at the window, calling softly to his Mistresse, as if she had bene there; but he was over-heard by the women in the darke: and immediately apprehended by the Guard, who forthwith brought him before the Lord Marshall, where being examined, and he avouching, that Restituta was his elected wife, and for her he had presumed in that manner; closely was he kept in prison till the next morning. When he came into the Kings presence, and there boldly justified the goodnesse of his cause: Restituta likewise was sent for, who no sooner saw her deare Love Guion, but she ran and caught him fast about the necke, kissing him in teares, and greeving not a little at his hard fortune. Heereat the King grew exceedingly enraged, loathing and hating her now, much more then formerly hee did affect her, and having himselfe seene by what strange meanes he did climbe over the wall, and then mounted to her Chamber window; he was extreamely impatient, and could not otherwise bee perswaded, but that their meetings thus had bene very many.

Forthwith hee sentenced them both with death, commanding, that they should be conveyed thence to Palermo, and there (being stript starke naked) be bound to a stake backe to backe, and so to stand the full space of nine houres, to see if any could take knowledge, of whence, or what they were; then afterward, to be consumed with fire. The sentence of death, did not so much daunt or dismay the poore Lovers, as the uncivill and unsightly manner, which (in feare of the Kings wrathfull displeasure) no man durst presume to contradict. Wherefore, as he had commanded, so were they carryed thence to Palermo, and bound naked to a stake in the open Market place, and (before their eyes) the fire of wood brought, which was to consume them, according to the houre as the King had appointed. You neede not make any question, what an huge concourse of people were soone assembled together, to behold such a sad and wofull spectacle, even the whole City of Palermo, both men and women. The men were stricken with admiration, beholding the unequalled beauty of faire Restituta, and the selfe-same passion possessed the women, seeing Guion to be such a goodly and compleat young man: but the poore infortunate Lovers themselves, they stood with their lookes dejected to the ground, being much pittied of all, but no way to be holpen or rescued by any, awaiting when the happy houre would come, to finish both their shame and lives together.

During the time of this tragicall expectation, the fame of this publike execution being noysed abroade, calling all people farre and neere to behold it; it came to the eare of Don Rogiero de Oria, a man of much admired valour, and then Lord high Admirall of Sicily, who came himselfe in person, to the place appointed for their death. First, he observed the Mayden, confessing her (in his soule) to be a beauty beyond all compare. Then looking on the young man, thus he saide within himselfe: If the inward endowments of the mind, doe paralell the outward perfections of body; the World cannot yeeld a more compleate man. Now, as good natures are quickly incited to compassion (especially in cases almost commanding it) and compassion knocking at the doore of the soule, doth quicken the memory with many passed recordations: so this noble Admirall, advisedly, beholding poore condemned Guion, conceived, that he had somewhat seene him before this instant, and upon this perswasion (even as if divine vertue had tutored his tongue) he saide: Is not thy name Guion di Procida?

Marke now, how quickly misery can receive comfort, upon so poore and silly a question; for Guion began to elevate his dejected countenance, and looking on the Admirall, returned him this answer. Sir, heretofore I have bene the man which you speake of; but now, both that name and man must die with me. What misfortune (said the Admirall) hath thus unkindly crost thee? Love (answered Guion) and the Kings displeasure. Then the Admirall would needs know the whole history at large, which briefly was related to him, and having heard how all had happened; as he was turning his Horse to ride away thence, Guion called to him, saying, Good my Lord, entreat one favour for me, if possibly it may be. What is that? replyed the Admirall. You see Sir (quoth Guion) that I am very shortly to breathe my last; all the grace which I do most humbly entreat, is, that as I am here with this chaste Virgin, (whom I honour and love beyond my life) and miserably bound backe to backe: our faces may be turned each to other, to the end, that when the fire shall finish my life, by looking on her, my soule may take her flight in full felicity. The Admirall smiling, said; I will do for thee what I can, and (perhaps) thou mayest so long looke on her, as thou wilt be weary, and desire to looke off her.

At his departure, he commanded them that had the charge of this execution, to proceede no further, untill they heard more from the King, to whom he gallopped immediately, and although he beheld him to bee very angerly moved; yet he spared not to speake in this maner. Sir, wherin have those poore young couple offended you, that are so shamefully to be burnt at Palermo? The King told him: whereto the Admirall (pursuing still his purpose) thus replyed. Beleeve me Sir, if true love be an offence, then theirs may be termed to be one; and albeit it deserved death, yet farre be it from thee to inflict it on them: for as faults doe justly require punishment, so doe good turnes as equally merit grace and requitall. Knowest thou what and who they are, whom thou hast so dishonourably condemned to the fire? Not I, quoth the King. Why then I will tell thee, answered the Admirall, that thou mayest take the better knowledge of them, and forbeare hereafter, to be so over violently transported with anger.

The young Gentleman, is the Sonne to Landolfo di Procida, the onely Brother to Lord John di Procida, by whose meanes thou becamest Lord and King of this Countrey. The faire young Damosell, is the Daughter to Marino Bulgaro, whose power extendeth so farre, as to preserve thy prerogative in Ischia, which (but for him) had long since bene out-rooted there. Beside, these two maine motives, to challenge justly grace and favour from thee; they are in the floure and pride of their youth, having long continued in loyall love together, and compelled by fervency of endeared affection, not any will to displease thy Majesty: they have offended (if it may be termed an offence to love, and in such lovely young people as they are.) Canst thou then finde in thine heart to let them die, whom thou rather ought to honour, and recompence with no meane rewards?

When the King had heard this, and beleeved for a certainty, that the Admirall told him nothing but truth: he appointed not onely, that they should proceede no further, but also was exceeding sorrowfull for what he had done, sending presently to have them released from the Stake, and honourably to be brought before him. Being thus enstructed in their severall qualities, and standing in duty obliged, to recompence the wrong which he had done, with respective honours: he caused them to be cloathed in royall garments, and knowing them to bee knit in unity of soule; the like he did by marrying them solemnly together, and bestowing many rich gifts and presents on them, sent them honourably attended home to Ischia; where they were with much joy and comfort received, and lived long after in great felicity.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THE SUNDRY TRAVELS AND PERILLOUS ACCIDENTS, OCCASIONED BY THOSE TWO POWERFULL COMMANDERS, LOVE AND FORTUNE, THE INSULTING TYRANTS OVER HUMANE LIFE.

THEODORO *falling in love with Violenta, the Daughter to his Master, named Amarigo, and she conceiving with child by him; was condemned to be hanged. As they were leading him to the Gallowes, beating and misusing him all the way: he happened to be knowne of his owne Father, whereupon he was released, and afterward enjoyed Violenta in marriage.*

GREATLY were the Ladies minds perplexed, when they heard, that the two poore Lovers were in danger to be burned: but hearing afterward of their happy deliverance, for which they were as joyfull againe; upon the concluding of the Novell, the Queene looked on Madame Lauretta, enjoyning her to tell the next Tale, which willingly she undertooke to do, and thus began.

Faire Ladies, at such time as the good King William reigned in Sicily, there lived within the same Dominion, a young Gentleman, named Signior Amarigo, Abbot of Trapani, who among his other worldly blessings, (commonly termed the goods of Fortune) was not unfurnished of children; and therefore having neede of servants, he made his provision of them the best he might. At that time, certaine Gallies of Geneway Pyrates comming from the Easterne parts, which coasting along Armenia, had taken divers children; he bought some of them, thinking that they were Turkes. They all resembling clownish Peazants, yet there was one among them, who seemed to be of more tractable and gentle nature, yea, and of a more affable countenance than any of the rest, being named Theodoro: who growing on in yeeres, (albeit he lived in the condition of a servant) was educated among Amarigoes Children, and as enstructed rather by nature, then accident, his conditions were very much commended, as also the feature of his body, which proved so highly pleasing to his Master Amarigo, that he made him a free man, and imagining him to be a Turke, caused him to be baptized, and named Pedro, creating him superintendent of all his affaires, and reposing his chiefest trust in him.

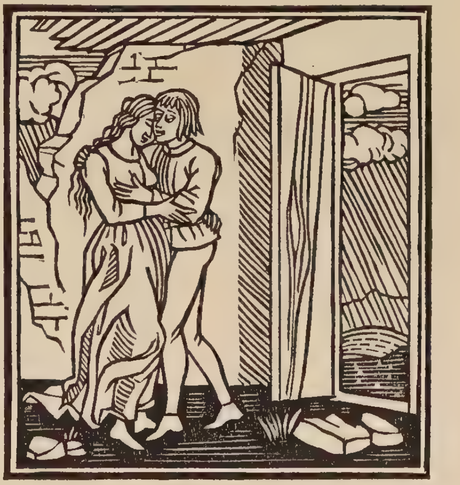
As the other Children of Signior Amarigo grew in yeeres and stature, so did a Daughter of his, named Violenta, a very goodly and beautifull Damosell, somewhat over-long kept from marriage by her Fathers covetousnesse, and casting an eye of good liking on poore Pedro. Now, albeit shee loved him very dearly, and all his behaviour was most pleasing to her, yet maiden modesty forbad her to reveale it, till Love (too long concealed) must needes disclose it selfe. Which Pedro at the length tooke notice of, and grew so forward towards her in equality of affection, as the very sight of her was his onely happinesse. Yet very fearefull he was, least it should be noted, either by any of the House, or the Mayden her selfe: who yet well observed it, and to her no meane contentment, as it appeared no lesse (on the other side) to honest Pedro.

While thus they loved together meerely in dumbe shewes, not daring to speake to each other, (though nothing more desired) to finde some ease in this their oppressing passions: Fortune, even as if she pittied their so long languishing, enstructed them how to finde out a way, whereby they might both better releeve themselves. Signior Amarigo, about some two or three miles distance from Trapani, had a Countrey-House or Farme, whereto his Wife, with her Daughter and some other women, used oftentimes to make their resort, as it were in sportfull recreation; Pedro alwayes being diligent to man them thither. One time among the rest, it came to passe, as often it falleth out in the Summer season, that the faire Skie became suddenly over-clouded, even as they were returning home towards Trapani, threatning a storme of raine to overtake them, except they made the speedier haste.

Pedro, who was young, and likewise Violenta, went farre more lightly then her Mother and her company, as much perhaps provoked by love, as feare of the sudden raine falling, and paced on so fast before them, that they were wholly out of sight. After many flashes of lightning, and a few dreadfull clappes of thunder, there fell such a tempestuous showre of hayle, as compelled the Mother and her traine to shelter themselves in a poore Countrey-mans Cottage. Pedro and Violenta, having no other refuge, ranne likewise into a poore Sheepecoate, so over-ruined, as it was in danger to fall on their heads; and no body dwelt in it, neither stood any other house neere it, and it was scarsely any shelter for them, howbeit, necessity enforceth to make shift with the meanest. The storme encreasing more and more, and they coveting to avoyd it as well as they could; sighes and drie hemmes were often inter-vented, as dumbly (before) they were wont to doe, when willingly they could affoord another kinde of speaking.

At last Pedro tooke heart, and saide: I would this showre would never cease, that I might be alwayes where I am. The like could I wish, answered Violenta, so we were in a better place of safety. These wishes drew on other gentle language, with modest kisses and embraces, the onely ease to poore Lovers soules; so that the raine ceased not, till they had taken order for their oftner conversing, and absolute plighting of their faiths together. By this time the storme was fairely over-blowne, and they attending on the way, till the Mother and the rest were come, with whom they returned to Trapani, where by wise and provident meanes, they often conferred in private together, and enjoyed the benefit of their amorous desires, yet free from any ill surmise or suspition.

But, as Lovers felicities are sildome permanent, without one encountring crosse or other: so these stolne pleasures of Pedro and Violenta, met with as sowre a sauce in the farewell. For, shee proved to be conceived with childe, then which could befall them no heavier affliction, and Pedro fearing to loose his life therefore, determined immediate flight, and revealed his purpose to Violenta. Which when she heard, she told him plainly, that if he fled, forth-with she would kill her selfe. Alas deare Love (quoth Pedro) with what reason can you wish my tarrying here? This conception of yours, doth discover our offence, which a Fathers pity may easily pardon in you: but



I being his servant and vassall, shall be punished both for your sinne and mine, because he will have no mercy on me. Content thy selfe Pedro, replyed Violenta, I will take such order for mine owne offence, by the discreete counsell of my loving Mother, that no blame shall any way be laide on thee, or so much as a surmise, except thou wilt fondly betray thy selfe. If you can do so, answered Pedro, and constantly maintaine your promise; I will not depart, but see that you prove to bee so good as your word.

Violenta, who had concealed her amisse so long as she could, and saw no other remedy, but now at last it must needes be discovered; went privately to her Mother, and (in teares) revealed her infirmity, humbly craving her pardon, and furtherance in hiding it from her Father. The Mother being extraordinarily displeased, chiding her with many sharpe and angry speeches, would needes know with whom shee had thus offended. The Daughter (to keepe Pedro from any detection) forged a Tale of her owne braine, farre from any truth indeede, which her Mother verily beleeving, and willing to preserve her Daughter from shame, as also the fierce anger of her Husband, he being a man of very implacable nature: conveyed her to the Countrey-Farme, whither Signior Amarigo sildome or never resorted, intending (under the shadow of sicknesse) to let her lye in there, without the least suspition of any in Trapani.

Sinne and shame can never be so closely carryed, or clouded with the greatest cunning; but truth hath a loop-light whereby to discover it, even when it supposeth it selfe in the surest safety. For, on the very day of her deliverance, at such time as the Mother, and some few friends (sworne to secrecy) were about the businesse, Signior Amarigo, having beene in company of other Gentlemen, to flye his Hawke at the River, upon a sudden, (but very unfortunately, albeit hee was alone by himselfe) stept into his Farm-house, even to the next roome where the women were, and heard the new-borne Babe to cry, whereat marvelling not a little, he called for his Wife, to know what young childe cryed in his House. The Mother, amazed at his strange comming thither, which never before he had used to doe, and pittying the wofull distresse of her Daughter, which now could bee no longer covered, revealed what happened to Violenta. But he, being nothing so rash in beliefe, as his Wife was, made answere, that it was impossible for his Daughter to be conceived with childe, because he never observed the least signe of love in her to any man whatsoever, and therefore he would be satisfied in the truth, as shee expected any favour from him, or else there was no other way but death.

The Mother laboured by all meanes she could devise, to pacifie her Husbands fury, which proved all in vaine; for being thus impatiently incensed, he drew foorth his Sword, and stepping with it drawne into the Chamber (where she had bene delivered of a goodly Sonne) he said unto her. Either tell me who is the Father of this Bastard, or thou and it shall perish both together. Poore Violenta, lesse respecting her owne life, then she did the childes; forgot her solemne promise made to Pedro, and discovered all. Which when Amarigo had heard, he grew so desperately enraged, that hardly he could forbeare from killing her. But after hee had spoken what his fury enstructed him, hee mounted on Horsebacke againe, ryding backe to Trapani, where hee disclosed the injury which Pedro had done him, to a noble Gentleman, named Signior Conrado, who was Captaine for the King over the City.

Before poore Pedro could have any intelligence, or so much as suspected any treachery against him; he was suddenly apprehended, and being called in question, stood not on any deniall, but confessed truly what hee had done: whereupon, within some few dayes after, he was condemned by the Captaine, to be whipt to the place of execution, and afterward to be hanged by the necke. Signior Amarigo, because he would cut off (at one and the same time) not onely the lives of the two poore Lovers, but their childes also; as a franticke man, violently carried from all sense of compassion, even when Pedro was led and whipt to his death: he mingled strong poyson in a Cup of wine, delivering it to a trusty servant of his owne, and a naked Rapier withall, speaking to him in this manner. Goe carry these two presents to my late Daughter Violenta, and tell her from me, that in this instant houre, two severall kinds of death are offered unto her, and one of them she must make choyce of, either to drinke the poyson, and so dye, or to run her body on this Rapiers point, which if she denie to doe, she shall be haled to the publike market place, and presently be burned in the sight of her lewd companion, according as shee hath worthily deserved. When thou hast delivered her this message, take her Bastard brat, so lately since borne, and dash his braines out against the walles, and afterward throw him to my Dogges to feede on.

When the Father had given this cruell sentence, both against his owne Daughter, and her young Sonne, the servant readier to do evill, then any good, went to the place where his Daughter was kept. Poore condemned Pedro, (as you have heard) was led whipt to the Gibbet, and passing (as it pleased the Captaines Officers to guide him) by a faire Inne: at the same time were lodged there three chiefe persons of Arminia, whom the King of the Countrey had sent to Rome, as Ambassadours to the Popes Holinesse, to negociate about an important businesse neerely concerning the King and State. Reposing there for some few dayes, as being much wearied with their journey, and highly honoured by the Gentlemen of Trapani, especially Signior Amarigo; these Ambassadours standing in their Chamber window, heard the wofull lamentations of Pedro in his passage by.

Pedro was naked from the middle upward, and his hands bound fast behind him, but being well observed by one of the Ambassadours, a man aged, and of great authority, named Phinio: hee espied a great red spot upon his breast, not painted, or procured by his punishment, but naturally imprinted in the flesh, which women (in these parts) terme the Rose. Upon the sight hereof, he suddenly remembred a Sonne of his owne, which was stolne from him about fifteene yeeres before, by Pyrates on the Sea-coast of Laiazzo, never hearing any tydings of him afterward. Upon further consideration, and comparing his Sonnes age with the likelyhood of this poore wretched mans; thus he conferred with his owne thoughts. If my Sonne (quoth he) be living, his age is equall to this mans time, and by the red blemish on his breast, it plainely speakes him for to bee my Sonne.

Moreover, thus he conceived, that if it were he, he could not but remember his owne name, his Fathers, and the Armenian Language; wherefore, when he was just opposite before the window, hee called aloud to him, saying: Theodoro. Pedro hearing the voyce, presently lifted up his head, and Phinio speaking Armenian, saide: Of whence art thou, and what is thy Fathers name? The Sergeants (in reverence to the Lord Ambassador) stayed awhile, till Pedro had returned his answer, who saide. I am an Armenian borne, Sonne to one Phineo, and was brought hither I cannot tell by whom. Phineo hearing this, knew then assuredly, that this was the same Sonne which he had lost; wherefore, the teares standing in his eyes with conceite of joy, downe he descended from the window, and the other Ambassadors with him, running in among the Sergeants to embrace his Sonne, and casting his owne rich Cloake about his whipt body, entreating them to forbeare and proceed no further, till they heard what command he should returne withall unto them; which very willingly they promised to do.

Already, by the generall rumour dispersed abroad, Phineo had understood the occasion, why Pedro was thus punished, and sentenced to bee hanged: wherefore, accompanied with his fellow Ambassadors, and all their attending traine, he went to Signior Conrado, and spake thus to him. My Lord, he whom you have sent to death as a slave, is a free Gentleman borne, and my Sonne, able to make her amends whom he hath dishonoured, by taking her in marriage as his lawfull Wife. Let me therefore entreat you, to make stay of the execution, untill it may be knowne, whether she will accept him as her Husband, or no; least (if she be so pleased) you offend directly against your owne Law. When Signior Conrado heard, that Pedro was Sonne to the Lord Ambassador, he wondred thereat not a little, and being somewhat ashamed of his fortunes errour, confessed, that the claime of Phineo was comformable to Law, and ought not to be denied him; going presently to the Counsell Chamber, sending for Signior Amarigo immediately thither, and acquainting him fully with the case.

Amarigo, who beleeved that his Daughter and her Child were already dead, was the wofullest man in the World, for his so rash proceeding, knowing very well, that if she were not dead, the scandall would easily be wipt away with credit. Wherefore he sent in all poast haste, to the place where his Daughter lay, that if his command were not already executed, by no meanes to have it done at all. He who went on this speedy errand, found there Signior Amarigoes servant standing before Violenta, with the Cup of poyson in the one hand, and the drawne Rapier in the other, reproaching her with very foule and injurious speeches, because she had delayed the time so long, and would not accept the one or other, striving (by violence) to make her take the one. But hearing his Masters command to the contrary, he left her, and returned backe to him, certifying him how the case stood.

Most highly pleased was Amarigo with these glad newes, and going to the Ambassadour Phineo, in teares excused himselfe (so well as he could) for his severity, and craving pardon; assured him, that if Theodoro would accept his Daughter in marriage, willingly he would bestow her on him. Phineo allowed his excuses to be tollerable, and saide beside; If my Son will not marry your Daughter, then let the sentence of death be executed on him. Amarigo and Phineo being thus accorded, they went to poore Theodoro, fearefully looking every minute when he should dye, yet joyfull that he had found his Father, who presently moved the question to him. Theodoro hearing that Violenta should bee his Wife, if he would so accept her: was over come with such exceeding joy, as if he had leapt out of hell into Paradise; confessing, that no greater felicity could befall him, if Violenta her selfe were so well pleased as he.

The like motion was made to her, to understand her disposition in this case, who hearing what good hap had befalne Theodoro, and now in like manner must happen to her: whereas not long before, when two such violent deathes were prepared for her, and one of them shee must needs embrace, she accounted her misery beyond all other womens, but she now thought her selfe above all in happinesse, if she might be wife to her beloved Theodoro, submitting her selfe wholy to her Fathers disposing. The marriage being agreed on betweene them, it was celebrated with great pompe and solemnity, a generall Feast being made for all the Citizens, and the young married couple nourished up their sweete Son, which grew to be a very comely childe.

After that the Embassie was dispatched at Rome, and Phineo (with the rest) was returned thither againe; Violenta did reverence him as her owne naturall Father, and he was not a little proud of so lovely a

Daughter, beginning a fresh feasting againe, and continuing the same a whole moneth together. Within some short while after, a Galley being fairely furnished for the purpose, Phineo, his Sonne, Daughter, and their young Sonne, went aboard, sayling away thence to Laiazzo, where afterward they lived in much tranquility.

THE EIGHTH NOVELL

DECLARING, THAT LOVE NOT ONELY MAKES A MAN PRODIGALL, BUT ALSO AN ENEMY TO HIMSELFE. MOREOVER, ADVENTURE OFTENTIMES BRINGETH SUCH MATTERS TO PASSE, AS WIT AND CUNNING IN MAN CAN NEVER COMPREHEND.

ANASTASIO, *a Gentleman of the Family of the Honesti, by loving the Daughter to Signior Paulo Traversario, lavishly wasted a great part of his substance, without receiving any love from her againe. By perswasion of some of his kindred and friends, he went to a Countrey dwelling of his, called Chiasso, where he saw a Knight desperately pursue a young Damoseli; whom he slew, and afterward gave her to be devoured by his Hounds. Anastasio invited his friends, and hers also whom he so dearely loved, to take part of a dinner with him, who likewise saw the same Damosell so torne in peeces: which his unkind Love perceiving, and fearing least the like ill fortune should happen to her; she accepted Anastasio to be her Husband.*

So soone as Madam Lauretta held her peace, Madam Pampinea (by the Queenes command) began, and said. Lovely Ladies, as pitty is most highly commended in our sexe, even so is cruelty in us as severely revenged (oftentimes) by divine ordination. Which that you may the better know, and learne likewise to shun, as a deadly evill; I purpose to make apparant by a Novell, no lesse full of compassion, then delectable.

Ravenna being a very ancient City in Romania, there dwelt sometime a great number of worthy Gentlemen, among whom I am to speake of one more especially, named Anastasio, descended from the Family of the Honesti, who by the death of his Father, and an Unckle of his, was left extraordinarily abounding in riches, and growing to yeares fitting for marriage, (as young Gallants are easily apt enough to do) he became enamored of a very bountifull Gentlewoman, who was Daughter to Signior Paulo Traversario, one of the most ancient and noble Families in all the Countrey. Nor made he any doubt, but by his meanes and industrious endeavour, to derive affection from her againe; for he carried himselfe like a brave-minded Gentleman, liberall in his expences, honest and affable in all his actions, which commonly are the true notes of a good nature, and highly to be commended in any man. But, howsoever Fortune became his enemy, these laudable parts of manhood did not any way friend him, but rather appeared hurtfull to himselfe: so cruell, unkind, and almost meerely savage did she shew her selfe to him; perhaps in pride of her singular beauty, or presuming on her nobility by birth, both which are rather blemishes, then ornaments in a woman, especially when they be abused.

The harsh and uncivill usage in her, grew very distastefull to Anastasio, and so unsufferable, that after a long time of fruitlesse service, requited still with nothing but coy disdaine; desperate resolutions entred into his brain, and often he was minded to kill himselfe. But better thoughts supplanting those furious passions, he abstained from any such violent act; and governed by more manly consideration, determined, that as shee hated him, he would requite her with the like, if he could: wherein he became altogether deceived, because as his hopes grew to a dayly decaying, yet his love enlarged it selfe more and more.

Thus Anastasio persevering still in his bootlesse affection, and his expences not limited within any compasse; it appeared in the judgement of his Kindred and Friends, that he was falne into a mighty consumption, both of his body and meanes. In which respect, many times they advised him to leave the City of Ravenna, and live in some other place for such a while; as might set a more moderate stint upon his spendings, and bridle the indiscreete course of his love, the onely fuell which fed this furious fire.

Anastasio held out thus a long time, without lending an eare to such friendly counsell: but in the end, he was so neerely followed by them, as being no longer able to deny them, he promised to accomplish their request. Whereupon, making such extraordinary preparation, as if he were to set thence for France or Spaine, or else into some further distant countrey: he mounted on horsebacke, and accompanied with some few of his familiar friends, departed from Ravenna, and rode to a countrey dwelling house of his owne, about three or foure miles distant from the Cittie, which was called Chiasso, and there (upon a very goodly greene) erecting divers Tents and Pavillions, such as great persons make use of in the time of a Progresse: he said to his friends, which came with him thither, that there he determined to make his abiding, they all returning backe unto Ravenna, and might come to visite him againe so often as they pleased.

Now, it came to passe, that about the beginning of May, it being then a very milde and serrene season, and he leading there a much more magnificent life, then ever hee had done before, inviting divers to dine with him this day, and as many to morrow, and not to leave him till after supper: upon the sodaine, falling into remembrance of his cruell Mistris, hee commanded all his servants to forbeare his company, and suffer him to walke alone by himselfe awhile, because he had occasion of private meditations, wherein he would not (by any meanes) be troubled. It was then about the ninth houre of the day, and he walking on solitary all alone, having gone some halfe miles distance from his Tents, entred into a Grove of Pine-trees, never minding dinner time, or any thing else, but onely the unkind requitall of his love.

Sodainly he heard the voice of a woman, seeming to make most mournfull complaints, which breaking off his silent considerations, made him to lift up his head, to know the reason of this noise. When he saw himselfe so farre entred into the Grove, before he could imagine where he was; hee looked amazedly round about him, and out of a little thicket of bushes and briars, round engirt with spreading trees, hee espyed a young Damosell come running towards him, naked from the middle upward, her haire dishevelled on her shoulders, and her faire skinne rent and torne with the briars and brambles, so that the blood ran trickling downe mainely; she weeping, wringing her hands, and crying out for mercy so lowde as she could. Two fierce Bloodhounds also followed swiftly after, and where their teeth tooke hold, did most cruelly bite her. Last of all (mounted on a lusty blacke Courser) came gallopping a Knight, with a very sterne and angry countenance, holding a drawne short Sword in his hand, giving her very vile and dreadfull speeches, and threatning every minute to kill her.

This strange and uncouth sight, bred in him no meane admiration, as also kinde compassion to the unfortunate woman; out of which compassion, sprung an earnest desire, to deliver her (if he could) from a death so full of anguish and horror: but seeing himselfe to be without Armes, he ran and pluckt up the plant of a Tree, which handling as if it had bene a staffe, he opposed himselfe against the Dogges and the Knight, who seeing him comming, cryed out in this manner to him. Anastasio, put not thy selfe in any opposition, but referre to my Hounds and me, to punish this wicked woman as she hath justly deserved. And in speaking these words, the Hounds tooke fast hold on her body, so staying her, untill the Knight was come neerer to her, and alighted from his horse: when Anastasio (after some other angry speeches) spake thus unto him: I cannot tell what or who thou art, albeit thou takest such knowledge of me, yet I must say, that it is meere cowardize in a Knight, being armed as thou art, to offer to kill a naked woman, and make thy dogges thus to seize on her, as if she were a savage beast; therefore beleeve me, I will defend her so farre as I am able.

Anastasio, answered the Knight, I am of the same City as thou art, and do well remember, that thou wast a little Ladde, when I (who was then named Guido Anastasio, and thine Unckle) became as intirely in love with this woman, as now thou art of Paulo Traversarioes daughter. But through her coy disdaine and cruelty, such was my heavy fate, that desperately I slew my selfe with this short sword which thou beholdest in mine hand: for which rash sinfull deede, I was, and am condemned to eternall punishment. This wicked woman, rejoycing immeasurably in mine unhappy death, remained no long time alive after me, and for her mercilesse sinne of cruelty, and taking pleasure in my oppressing torments; dying unrepentant, and in pride of her scorne, she had the like sentence of condemnation pronounced on her, and sent to the same place where I was tormented.

There the three impartiall Judges, imposed this further infliction on us both; namely, that she should flye in this manner before me, and I (who loved her so deerely while I lived) must pursue her as my deadly enemy, not like a woman that had a taste of love in her. And so often as I can overtake her, I am to kill her with this sword, the same Weapon wherewith I slew my selfe. Then am I enjoyned, therewith to open her accursed body, and teare out her hard and frozen heart, with her other inwards, as now thou seest me doe, which I give unto my Hounds to feede on. Afterward, such is the appointment of the supreame powers, that she re-assumeth life againe, even as if she had not bene dead at all, and falling to the same kinde of flight, I with my Hounds am still to follow her; without any respite or intermission. Every Friday, and just at this houre, our course is this way, where she suffereth the just punishment inflicted on her. Nor do we rest any of the other dayes, but are appointed unto other places, where she cruelly executed her malice against me, being now (of her deare affectionate friend) ordained to be her endlesse enemy, and to pursue her in this manner for so many yeares, as she exercised moneths of cruelty, towards me. Hinder me not then, in being the executioner of divine justice; for all thy interposition is but in vaine, in seeking to crosse the appointment of supreame powers.

Anastasio having attentively heard all this discourse, his haire stood upright like Porcupines quils, and his soule was so shaken with the terror, that he stept backe to suffer the Knight to do what he was enjoyned, looking yet with milde commisseration on the poore woman. Who kneeling most humbly before the Knight, and stearnely seized on by the two blood-hounds, he opened her brest with his weapon, drawing foorth her heart and bowels, which instantly he threw to the dogges, and they devoured them very greedily. Soone after, the Damosell (as if none of this punishment had bene inflicted on her) started up sodainly, running amaine towards the Sea shore, and the Hounds swiftly following her, as the Knight did the like, after he had taken his sword, and was mounted on horsebacke; so that Anastasio had soone lost all sight of them, and could not gesse what was become of them.

After he had heard and observed all these things, he stoode a while as confounded with feare and pitty, like a simple silly man, hoodwinkt with his owne passions, not knowing the subtle enemies cunning illusions in offering false suggestions to the sight, to worke his owne ends thereby, and encrease the number of his deceived servants. Forthwith he perswaded himselfe, that he might make good use of this womans tormenting, so justly imposed on the Knight to prosecute, if thus it should continue still every Friday. Wherefore, setting a good note or marke upon the place, he returned backe to his owne people, and at such time as he thought convenient, sent for divers of his kindred and friends from Ravenna, who being present with him, thus he spake to them.

Deare Kinsmen and Friends, ye have a long while importuned me, to discontinue my over-doating love to her, whom you all thinke, and I find to be my mortall enemy: as also, to give over my lavish expences, wherein I confesse my selfe too prodigall; both which requests of yours, I will condiscend to, provided, that you will performe one gracious favour for me; Namely, that on Friday next, Signior Paulo Traversario, his wife, daughter, with all other women linked in linage to them, and such beside onely as you shall please to appoint, will vouchsafe to accept a dinner heere with me; as for the reason thereto mooving me, you shall then more at large be acquainted withall. This appeared no difficult matter for them to accomplish: wherefore, being returned to Ravenna, and as they found the time answerable to their purpose, they invited such as Anastasio had appointed them. And although they found it some-what an hard matter, to gaine her company whom he so deerely affected; yet notwithstanding, the other women won her along with them.

A most magnificent dinner had Anastasio provided, and the tables were covered under the Pine-trees, where he saw the cruell Lady so pursued and slaine: directing the guests so in their seating, that the yong Gentlewoman his unkinde Mistresse, sate with her face opposite unto the place, where the dismall spectacle was to be seene. About the closing up of dinner, they beganne to heare the noise of the poore prosecuted Woman, which drove them all to much admiration; desiring to know what it was, and no one resolving them, they arose from the Tables, and looking directly as the noise came to them, they espyed the wofull Woman, the Dogges eagerly pursuing her; and the armed Knight on horsebacke, gallopping fiercely after them with his drawne weapon, and came very nere unto the company, who cryed out with lowd exclaimes against the dogs and the Knight, stepping forth in assistance of the injured woman.

The Knight spake unto them, as formerly he had done to Anastasio, (which made them draw backe, possessed with feare and admiration) acting the same cruelty as he did the Friday before, not differing in the least degree. Most of the Gentlewomen there present, being neere allyed to the unfortunate Woman, and likewise to the Knight, remembring well both his love and death, did shed teares as plentifully, as if it had bin to the very persons themselves, in usuall performance of the action indeede. Which tragicall Scœne being passed over, and the Woman and Knight gone out of their sight: all that had seene this straunge accident, fell into diversity of confused opinions, yet not daring to disclose them, as doubting some further danger to ensue thereon.

But beyond all the rest, none could compare in feare and astonishment with the cruell yong Maide affected by Anastasio, who both saw and observed all with a more inward apprehension, knowing very well, that the morall of this dismall spectacle, carried a much neerer application to her then any other in all the company. For now she could call to mind, how unkinde and cruell she had shewne her selfe to Anastasio, even as the other Gentlewoman formerly did to her Lover, still flying from him in great contempt and scorne: for which, she thought the Blood-hounds also pursued her at the heeles already, and a sword of vengeance to mangle her body. This feare grew so powerfull in her, that to prevent the like heavy doome from falling on her, she studied (by all her best and commendable meanes, and therein bestowed all the night season) how to change her hatred into kinde love, which at the length she fully obtained, and then purposed to prosecute in this manner.

Secretly she sent a faithfull Chambermaide of her owne, to greete Anastasio on her behalfe; humbly entreating him to come see her: because now she was absolutely determined, to give him satisfaction in all which (with honour) he could request of her. Whereto Anastasio answered, that he accepted her message thankfully, and desired no other favour at her hand, but that which stood with her owne offer, namely, to be his Wife in honourable marriage. The Maide knowing sufficiently, that he could not be more desirous of the match, then her Mistresse shewed her selfe to be, made answer in her name, that this motion would be most welcome to her.

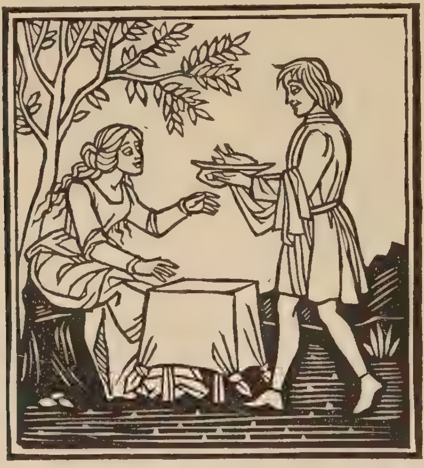
Heereupon, the Gentlewoman her selfe, became the solicitour to her Father and Mother, telling them plainly, that she was willing to be the Wife of Anastasio: which newes did so highly content them, that upon the Sunday next following, the marriage was very worthily solemnized, and they lived and loved together very kindly. Thus the divine bounty, out of the malignant enemies secret machinations, can cause good effects to arise and succeede. For, from this conceite of fearfull imagination in her, not onely happened this long desired conversion, of a Maide so obstinately scornfull and proud; but likewise all the women of Ravenna (being admonished by her example) grew afterward more kind and tractable to mens honest motions, then ever they shewed themselves before. And let me make some use hereof (faire Ladies) to you, not to stand over-nicely conceited of your beauty and good parts, when men (growing enamored of you by them) solicite you with their best and humblest services. Remember then this disdainfull Gentlewoman, but more especially her, who being the death of so kinde a Lover, was therefore condemned to perpetuall punishment, and he made the minister thereof, whom she had cast off with coy disdaine, from which I wish your minds to be as free, as mine is ready to do you any acceptable service.

THE NINTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS FIGURED TO THE LIFE, THE NOTABLE KINDNESSE AND COURTESIE, OF A TRUE AND CONSTANT LOVER: AS ALSO THE MAGNANIMOUS MINDE OF A FAMOUS LADY.

FREDERIGO, *of the Alberighi Family, loved a Gentlewoman, and was not requited with like love againe. By bountifull expences, and over liberall invitations, he wasted and consumed all his lands and goods, having nothing left him, but a Hawke or Faulcon. His unkinde Mistresse happeneth to come visite him, and he not having any other foode for her dinner; made a dainty dish of his Faulcone for her to feede on. Being conquered by this exceeding kinde courtesie; she changed her former hatred towardes him, accepting him as her Husband in marriage, and made him a man of wealthy possessions.*

MADAM Philomena having finished her discourse, the Queene perceiving, that her turne was the next, in regard of the priviledge granted to Dioneus; with a smiling countenance thus she spake. Now or never am I to maintaine the order which was instituted when wee began this commendable exercise, whereto I yeeld with all humble obedience. And (worthy Ladies) I am to acquaint you with a Novell, in some sort answerable to the precedent, not onely to let you know, how powerfully your kindnesses do prevaile, in such as have a free and gentle soule: but also to advise you, in being bountifull, where vertue doth justly challenge it. And evermore, let your favours shine on worthy deservers, without the direction of chaunce or Fortune, who never bestoweth any gift by discretion; but rashly without consideration, even to the first she blindly meets withall.



You are to understand then, that Coppo di Borghese Domenichi, who was of our owne City, and perhaps (as yet) his name remaineth in great and reverend authority, now in these dayes of ours, as well deserving eternall memory; yet more for his vertues and commendable qualities, then any boast of Nobility from his predecessors. This man, being well entred into yeares, and drawing towards the finishing of his dayes; it was his only delight and felicity, in conversation among his neighbours, to talke of matters concerning antiquity, and some other things within compasse of his owne knowledge: which he would deliver in such singular order, (having an absolute memory) and with the best Language, as very few or none could do the like. Among the multiplicity of his queint discourses, I remember he told us, that sometime there lived in Florence a yong Gentleman, named Frederigo, Sonne to Signior Phillippo Alberigo, who was held and reputed, both for Armes, and all other actions beseeming a Gentleman, hardly to have his equall through all Tuscany.

This Frederigo (as it is no rare matter in yong Gentlemen) became enamored of a Gentlewoman, named Madam Giana, who was esteemed (in her time) to be the fairest and most gracious Lady in all Florence. In which respect, and to reach the height of his desire, he made many sumptuous Feasts and Banquets, Joustes, Tilties, Tournaments, and all other noble actions of Armes, beside, sending her infinite rich and costly presents, making spare of nothing, but lashing all out in lavish expence. Notwithstanding, she being no lesse honest then faire, made no reckoning of whatsoever he did for her sake, or the least respect of his owne person. So that Frederigo, spending thus daily more, then his meanes and ability could maintaine, and no supplies any way redounding to him, or his faculties (as very easily they might) diminished in such sort, that he became so poore; as he had nothing left him, but a small poore Farme to live upon, the silly revenewes whereof were so meane, as scarcely allowed him meat and drinke; yet had he a faire Hawke or Faulcon, hardly any where to be fellowed, so expeditious and sure she was of flight. His low ebbe and poverty, no way quailing his love to the Lady, but rather setting a keener edge thereon; he saw the City life could no longer containe him, where most he coveted to abide: and therefore, betooke himselfe to his poore Countrey Farme, to let his Faulcon get him his dinner and supper, patiently supporting his penurious estate, without suite or meanes making to one, for helpe or reliefe in any such necessity.

While thus he continued in this extremity, it came to passe, that the Husband to Madam Giana fell sicke, and his debility of body being such, as little, or no hope of life remained: he made his last will and testament, ordaining thereby, that his Sonne (already growne to indifferent stature) should be heire to all his Lands and riches, wherein he abounded very greatly. Next unto him, if he chanced to die without a lawfull heire, he substituted his Wife, whom most dearely he affected, and so departed out of this life. Madam Giana being thus left a widdow; as commonly it is the custome of our City Dames, during the Summer season, she went to a house of her owne in the Countrey, which was somewhat neere to poore Frederigoes Farme, and where he lived in such an honest kind of contented poverty.

Hereupon, the young Gentleman her Sonne, taking great delight in Hounds and Hawkes; grew into familiarity with poore Frederigo, and having seene many faire flights of his Faulcon, they pleased him so extraordinarily, that he earnestly desired to enjoy her as his owne; yet durst not move the motion for her, because he saw how choycely Frederigo esteemed her. Within a short while after, the young Gentleman, became very sicke, whereat his Mother greeved exceedingly, (as having no more but he, and therefore loved him the more entirely) never parting from him night or day, comforting him so kindly as she could, and demanding, if he had a desire to any thing, willing him to reveale it, and assuring him withall, that (if it were within the compasse of possibility) he should have it. The youth hearing how many times she had made him these offers, and with such vehement protestations of performance, at last thus spake.

Mother (quoth he) if you can do so much for me, as that I may have Frederigoes Faulcon, I am perswaded, that my sicknesse soone will cease. The Lady hearing this, sate some short while musing to her selfe, and began to consider, what she might best doe to compasse her Sonnes desire: for well she knew, how long a time Frederigo had most lovingly kept it, not suffering it ever to be out of his sight. Moreover, shee remembred, how earnest in affection he had bene to her, never thinking himselfe happy, but onely when he was in her company; wherefore, shee entred into this private consultation with her owne thoughts. Shall I send, or goe my selfe in person, to request the Faulcon of him, it being the best that ever flew? It is his onely Jewell of delight, and that taken from him, no longer can he wish to live in this World. How farre then voyde of understanding shall I shew my selfe, to rob a Gentleman of his sole felicity, having no other joy or comfort left him? These and the like considerations, wheeled about her troubled braine, onely in tender care and love to her Sonne, perswading her selfe assuredly, that the Faulcon were her owne, if she would but request it: yet not knowing whereon it were best to resolve, shee returned no answer to her Sonne, but sate still in her silent meditations. At the length, love to the youth, so prevailed with her, that she concluded on his contentation, and (come of it what could) shee would not send for it; but go her selfe in person to request it, and then returne home againe with it: whereupon thus she spake. Sonne, comfort thy selfe, and let languishing thoughts no longer offend thee: for here I promise thee, that the first thing I do to morrow morning, shall bee my journey for the Faulcon, and assure thy selfe, that I will bring it with me. Whereat the youth was so joyed, that he imagined, his sicknesse began instantly a little to leave him, and promised him a speedy recovery.

Somewhat early the next morning, the Lady, in care of her sicke Sons health, was up and ready betimes, and taking another Gentlewoman with her; onely as a morning recreation, shee walked to Frederigoes poore Countrey Farme, knowing that it would not a little glad him to see her. At the time of her arrivall there, he was (by chance) in a silly Garden, on the backe-side of the House, because (as yet) it was no convenient time for flight: but when he heard, that Madam Giana was come thither, and desired to have some conference with him; as one almost confounded with admiration, in all hast he ran to her, and saluted her with most humble reverence. She in all modest and gracious manner, requited him with the like salutations, thus speaking to him. Signior Frederigo, your owne best wishes befriend you, I am now come hither, to recompence some part of your passed travailes, which heretofore you pretended to suffer for my sake, when your love was more to me, then did well become you to offer, or my selfe to accept. And such is the nature of my recompence, that I make my selfe your guest, and meane this day to dine with you, as also this Gentlewoman, making no doubt of our welcome: whereto, with lowly reverence, thus he replyed.

Madam, I doe not remember, that ever I sustained any losse or hinderance by you, but rather so much good, as if I was worth any thing, it proceeded from your great deservings, and by the service in which I did stand engaged to you. But my present happinesse can no way be equalled, derived from your super-abounding gracious favour, and more then common course of kindnesse, vouchsafing (of your owne liberall nature) to come and visit so poore a servant. Oh that I had as much to spend againe, as heretofore riotously I have runne thorow: what a welcome would your poore Host bestow upon you, for gracing this homely house with your divine presence? With these wordes, he conducted her into his house, and then into his simple Garden, where having no convenient company for her, he said. Madam, the poverty of this place is such, that it affoordeth none fit for your conversation: this poore woman, wife to an honest Husbandman will attend on you, while I (with some speede) shall make ready dinner.

Poore Frederigo, although his necessity was extreame, and his greefe great, remembring his former inordinate expences, a moity whereof would now have stood him in some stead; yet he had a heart as free and forward as ever, not a jotte dejected in his minde, though utterly overthrowne by Fortune. Alas! how was his good soule afflicted, that he had nothing wherewith to honour his Lady? Up and downe he runnes, one while this way, then againe another, exclaiming on his disastrous Fate, like a man enraged, or bereft of senses: for he had not one peny of mony neither pawne or pledge, wherewith to procure any. The time hasted on, and he would gladly (though in meane measure) expresse his honourable respect of the Lady. To begge of any, his nature denied it, and to borrow he could not, because his neighbours were all as needie as himselfe.

At last, looking round about, and seeing his Faulcon standing on her pearch, which he felt to be very plumpe and fat, being voyde of all other helpes in his neede, and thinking her to be a Fowle meete for so Noble a Lady to feede on: without any further demurring or delay, he pluckt off her necke, and caused the poore woman presently to pull her Feathers: which being done, he put her on the spit, and in short time she was daintily roasted. Himselfe covered the Table, set bread and salt on and laid the Napkins, whereof he had but a few left him. Going then with chearfull lookes into the Garden, telling the Lady that dinner was ready, and nothing now wanted, but her presence. Shee, and the Gentlewoman went in, and being sated at the Table, not knowing what they fed on, the Faulcon was all their foode; and Frederigo not a little joyfull, that his credite was so well saved. When they were risen from the table, and had spent some small time in familiar conference: the Lady thought it fit, to acquaint him with the reason of her comming thither, and therefore (in very kinde manner) thus began.

Frederigo, if you do yet remember your former carriage towards mee, as also my many modest and chaste denials, which (perhaps) you thought to savour of a harsh, cruell, and un-womanly nature, I make no doubt, but you will wonder at my present presumption, when you understand the occasion, which expressely mooved me to come hither. But if you were possessed of children, or ever had any, whereby you might comprehend what love (in nature) is due unto them: then I durst assure my selfe, that you would partly hold me excused.

Now, in regard that you never had any, and my selfe (for my part) have but onely one, I stand not exempted from those Lawes, which are in common to other mothers. And being compelled to obey the power of those Lawes; contrary to mine owne will, and those duties which reason ought to maintaine, I am to request such a gift of you, which I am certaine, that you do make most precious account of, as in manly equity you can do no lesse. For Fortune hath bin so extreamly adverse to you, that she hath robbed you of all other pleasures, allowing you no comfort or delight, but onely that poore one, which is your faire Faulcone. Of which Bird, my Sonne is become so strangely desirous, as, if I doe not bring it to him at my comming home; I feare so much, the extreamity of his sicknesse, as nothing can ensue thereon, but his losse of life. Wherefore I beseech you, not in regard of the love you have borne me, for therby you stand no way obliged: but in your owne true gentle nature (the which hath alwayes declared it selfe ready in you, to do more kinde offices generally, then any other Gentleman that I know) you will be pleased to give her me, or at the least, let me buy her of you. Which if you do, I shall freely then confesse, that onely by your meanes, my Sonnes life is saved, and we both shall for ever remaine engaged to you.

When Frederigo had heard the Ladies request, which was now quite out of his power to graunt, because it had bene her service at dinner: he stood like a man meerely dulled in his sences, the teares trickling amaine downe his cheekes, and he not able to utter one word. Which she perceiving, began to conjecture immediately, that these teares and passions proceeded rather from greefe of minde, as being loather to part with his Faulcon, then any other kinde of manner: which made her ready to say, that she would not have it. Neverthelesse she did not speake, but rather tarried to attend his answer. Which, after some small respite and pause, he returned in this manner.

Madame, since the houre, when first mine affection became soly devoted to your service; Fortune hath bene crosse and contrary to me, in many occasions, as justly, and in good reason I may complain of her, yet all seemed light and easie to be indured, in comparison of her present malicious contradiction, to my utter overthrow, and perpetuall mollestation. Considering, that you are come hither to my poore house, which (while I was rich and able) you would not so much as vouchsafe to looke on. And now you have requested a small matter of me, wherein she hath also most crookedly thwarted me, because she hath disabled me, in bestowing so meane a gift, as your selfe will confesse, when it shall be related to you in few words.

So soone as I heard, that it was your gracious pleasure to dine with me, having regard to your excellency, and what (by merit) is justly due unto you: I thought it a part of my bounden duty, to entertaine you with such exquisite viands, as my poore power could any way compasse, and farre beyond respect or welcome, to other common and ordinary persons. Whereupon, remembring my Faulcon, which now you aske for; and her goodnesse, excelling all other of her kinde; I supposed, that she would make a dainty dish for your dyet, and having drest her, so well as I could devise to do: you have fed heartily on her, and I am proud that I have so well bestowne her. But perceiving now, that you would have her for your sicke Sonne; it is no meane affliction to me, that I am disabled of yeelding you contentment, which all my life time I have desired to doe.

To approve his words, the feathers, feete, and beake were brought in, which when she saw, she greatly blamed him for killing so rare a Faulcon, to content the appetite of any woman whatsoever. Yet she commended his height of spirit, which poverty had no power to abase. Lastly, her hopes being frustrate for enjoying the Faulcon, and fearing besides the health of her Sonne, she thanked Frederigo for his honorable kindnesse, returning home againe sad and melancholly. Shortly after, her sonne either greeving that he could not have the Faulcon, or by extreamity of his disease, chanced to dye, leaving his mother a most wofull Lady.

After so much time was expired, as conveniently might agree with sorrow, and mourning; her Brethren made many motions to her, to joyne her selfe in marriage againe, because she was extraordinarily rich, and as yet but yong in yeares. Now although she was well contented never to be married any more; yet being continually importuned by them, and remembring the honorable honesty of Frederigo, his last poore, yet magnificent dinner, in killing his Faulcon for her sake, she saide to her Brethren. This kind of widdowed estate doth like me so well, as willingly I would never leave it: but seeing you are so earnest for my second marriage, let me plainly tell you, that I will never accept of any other husband, but onely Frederigo di Alberino.

Her Brethren in scornefull manner reprooved her, telling her, that he was a begger, and had nothing left to keepe him in the world. I know it well (quoth she) and am heartily sorry for it. But give me a man that hath neede of wealth, rather then wealth that hath neede of a man. The Brethren hearing how she stood addicted, and knowing Frederigo to be a worthy Gentleman, though poverty had disgraced him in the World: consented thereto, so she bestowed her selfe and her riches on him. He on the other side, having so noble a Lady to his Wife, and the same whom he had so long and deerely loved, submitted all his fairest Fortunes unto her, became a better husband (for the world) then before, and they lived, and loved together in equall joy and happinesse.

THE TENTH NOVELL

REPREHENDING THE CUNNING OF IMMODEST WOMEN, WHO BY ABUSING THEMSELVES, DO THROW EVILL ASPERSIONS ON ALL THEIR SEXE.

Pedro di Vinciolo went to sup at a friends house in the City. His wife (in the meane while) had a young man whom shee loved, at supper with her. Pedro returning home on a sodaine, the young man was hidden under a Coope for Hens. Pedro in excuse of his so soone comming home, declareth, how in the house of Herculano (with whom he should have supt) a friend of his Wives was found, which was the reason of the Suppers breaking off. Pedroes Wife reproving the error of Herculanoes wife, an Asse (by chance) treads on the yong mans fingers that lay hidden under the Hen-coope. Upon his crying out Pedro steppeth thither, sees him, knowes him, and findeth the fallacy of his wife; with whom (neverthelesse) he groweth to agreement, in regard of some imperfections in himselfe.

The Queenes Novell being ended, and all applauding the happy fortune of Frederigo, as also the noble nature of Madam Giana; Dioneus expecting no command, prepared to deliver his discourse in this maner. I know not whether I should terme it a vice accidentall, and insuing thorow the badnes of complexions on us mortals; or an error in Nature, to rejoyce rather at lewd accidents, then at deeds that deserve commendation, especially when they no way concern our selves. Now, in regard that all the paines I have hitherto taken, and am also to undergo at this present aymeth at no other end, but onely to purge your minds of melancholly, and entertain the time with mirthful matter: pardon me I pray you (faire Ladies) if my Tale trip in some part, and savour a little of immodesty; yet in hearing it, you may observe the same course, as you doe in pleasing and delightfull Gardens, plucke a sweete Rose, and preserve your fingers from pricking. Which very easily you may doe, winking at the imperfections of a foolish man, and smiling at the amourous subtilties of his Wife, compassionating the misfortune of others, where urgent necessity doth require it.

There dwelt not long since in Perugia, a wealthy man named Pedro di Vinciolo, who perhaps more to deceive some other, and restraine an evill opinion which the Perugians had conceived of him, in matter no way beseeming a man, then any beauty or good feature remaining in the woman entred into the estate of marriage. And Fortune was so conforme to him in his election, that the woman whom he had made his wife, had a yong, lusty, and well enabled bodie, a redhaird Wench, hot and fiery spirited, standing more in neede of three Husbands, then he, who could not any way well content one Wife, because his minde ran more on his mony, then those offices and duties belonging to wedlock, which time acquainted his Wife withall, contrary to her owne expectation, and those delights which the estate of marriage afforded, knowing her selfe also to be of a sprightly disposition, and not to be easily tamed by houshold cares and attendances, shee waxed weary of her husbands unkind courses, upbraided him daily with harsh speeches, making his owne home meerly as a hell to him.

When she saw that this domesticke disquietnesse returned her no benefit, but rather tended to her own consumption, then any amendment in her miserable Husband, shee began thus to conferre with her private thoughts. This Husband of mine liveth with me, as if he were no Husband, or I his Wife; the marriage bed, which should be a comfort to us both, seemeth hatefull to him, and as little pleasing to mee, because his minde is on his money, his head busied with worldly cogitations, and early and late in his counting-house, admitting no familiar conversation with me. Why should not I be as respectlesse of him, as he declares him selfe to be of me? I tooke him for an Husband, brought him a good and sufficient Dowry, thinking him to be a man, and affected a woman as a man ought to doe, else he had never beene any Husband of mine. If he be a Woman hater, why did he make choice of me to be his Wife? If I had not intended to be of the World, I could have coopt my selfe up in a Cloyster, and shorne my selfe a Nunne, but that I was not born to such severity of life. My youth shall be blasted with age before I can truly understand what youth is, and I shall be branded with the disgraceful word barrennesse, knowing my selfe meete and able to be a Mother, were my Husband but worthy the name of a Father, or expected issue and posterity, to leave our memoriall to after times in our race, as all our predecessours formerly have done, and for which mariage was chiefly instituted. Castles long besieged, doe yeeld at the last, and women wronged by their owne husbands, can hardly warrant their owne frailety, especially living among so many temptations, which flesh and bloud are not alwaies able to resist. Well, I meane to be advised in this case, before I will hazard my honest reputation, either to suspition or scandall, then which, no woman can have two heavier enemies, and very few there are that can escape them.

Having thus a long while consulted with her selfe, and (perhaps) oftner then twice or thrice; she became secretly acquainted with an aged woman, generally reputed to be more then halfe a Saint, walking alwayes very demurely in the streetes, counting (over and over) her Paters Nosters, and all the Cities holy pardons hanging at her girdle never talking of any thing, but the lives of the holy Fathers, or the woundes of Saint Frances, all the World admiring her sanctity of life, even as if shee were divinely inspired: this shee Saint must bee our distressed womans Counsellour, and having found out a convenient season, at large she imparted all her minde to her, in some such manner as formerly you have heard, whereto she returned this answer.

Now trust me Daughter, thy case is to be pittied, and so much the rather, because thou art in the flowre and spring time of thy youth, when not a minute of time is to bee left: for there is no greater an errour in this life, then the losse of time, because it cannot bee recovered againe; and when the fiends themselves affright us, yet if wee keepe our embers still covered with warme ashes on the hearth, they have not any power to hurt us. If any one can truly speake thereof, then I am able to deliver true testimony; for I know, but not without much perturbation of minde, and piercing afflictions in the spirit; how much time I lost without any profit. And yet I lost not all, for I would not have thee thinke me to bee so foolish, that I did altogether neglect such an especiall benefit; which when I call to mind, and consider now in what condition I am, thou must imagine, it is no small hearts griefe to mee, that age should make me utterly despised, and no fire affoorded to light my tinder.

With men it is not so, they are borne apt for a thousand occasions, as well for the present purpose wee talke of, as infinite other beside; yea, and many of them are more esteemed being aged, then when they were young. But women serve onely for mens contentation, and to bring Children; and therefore are they generally beloved, which if they faile of, either it is by unfortunate marriage, or some imperfection depending on nature, not through want of good will in themselves. Wee have nothing in this World but what is given us, in which regard, wee are to make use of our time, and employ it the better while wee have it. For, when wee grow to bee old, our Husbands, yea, our very dearest and nearest Friends, will scarsely looke on us. Wee are then fit for nothing, but to sit by the fire in the Kitchin, telling tales to the Cat, or counting the Pots and Pannes on the shelves. Nay, which is worse, Rimes and Songs is made of us, even in meere contempt of our age, and commendation of such as are young, the daintiest morsels are fittest for them, and wee referred to feed on the scrappes from their Trenchers, or such reversion as they can spare us. I tell thee Daughter, thou couldst not make choyce of a meeter woman in all the City, to whom thou mightest safely open thy minde, and knowes better to advise thee then I doe. But remember withall, that I am poore, and it is your part not to suffer poverty to bee unsupplyed. I will make thee partaker of all these blessed pardons, at every Altar I will say a Pater Noster, and an Ave Maria, that thou maist prosper in thy hearts-desires, and be defended from foule sinne and shame, and so she ended her Motherly counsell.

Within a while after, it came to passe, that her Husband was invited foorth to supper, with one named Herculano, a kinde Friend of his, but his Wife refused to goe, because she had appointed a Friend to Supper with her, to whom the old woman was employed as her messenger, and was well recompenced for her labour. This friend was a gallant proper youth, as any all Perugia yeelded, and scarcely was hee seated at the Table, but her Husband was returned backe, and called to bee let in at the doore. Which when shee perceived, she was almost halfe dead with feare, and coveting to hide the young man, that her Husband should not have any sight of him, shee had no other meanes, but in an entry, hard by the Parlour where they purposed to have supt, stood a Coope or Hen-pen, wherein shee used to keepe her Pullen, under which hee crept, and then shee covered it with an olde empty Sacke, and after ranne to let her Husband come in. When hee was entred into the House; as halfe offended at his so sudden returne, angerly she saide: It seemes Sir you are a shaver at your meate, that you have made so short a Supper. In troth Wife (quoth hee) I have not supt at all, no not so much as eaten one bit. How hapned that, said the woman? Marry Wife (quoth hee) I will tell you, and then thus he began.

As Herculano, his Wife, and I were sitting downe at the Table, very neere unto us wee heard one sneeze, whereof at the first wee made no reckoning, untill wee heard it againe the second time, yea, a third, fourth, and fifth, and many more after, whereat wee were not a little amazed. Now Wife I must tell you, before wee entred the roome where we were to sup, Herculanoes Wife kept the doore fast shut against us, and would not let us enter in an indifferent while; which made him then somewhat offended, but now much more, when hee had heard one to sneeze so often. Demaunded of her a reason for it, and who it was that thus sneezed in his House: hee started from the Table, and stepping to a little doore neere the staires head, necessarily made, to set such things in, as otherwise would be troublesome to the roome, (as in all Houses we commonly see the like) he perceived, that the party was hidden there, which wee had heard so often to sneeze before.

No sooner had hee opened the doore, but such a smell of brimstone came foorth (whereof wee felt not the least savour before) as made us likewise to cough and sneeze, being no way able to refraine it. Shee seeing her Husband to bee much moved, excused the matter thus: that (but a little while before) shee had whited certaine linnen with the smoake of brimstone, as it is a usuall thing to doe, and then set the Pan into that spare place, because it should not bee offensive to us. By this time, Herculano had espied him that sneezed, who being almost stifled with the smell, and closenesse of the small roome wherein hee lay, had not any power to helpe himselfe, but still continued coughing and sneezing, even as if his heart would have split in twaine. Foorth hee pluckt him by the heeles, and perceiving how matter had past, hee saide to her. I thanke you Wife, now I see the reason, why you kept us so long from comming into this roome: let mee die, if I beare this wrong at your hands. When his Wife heard these words, and saw the discovery of her shame; without returning either excuse or answere, foorth of doores shee ranne, but whither, wee know not. Herculano drew his Dagger, and would have slaine him that still lay sneezing: but I disswaded him from it, as well in respect of his, as also mine owne danger, when the Law should censure on the deede. And after the young man was indifferently recovered; by the perswasion of some Neighbours comming in: hee was closely conveyed out of the House, and all the noyse quietly pacified. Onely (by this meanes, and the flight of Herculanoes Wife) wee were disappointed of our Supper, and now you know the reason of my so soone returning.

When shee had heard this whole discourse, then shee perceived, that other Women were subject to the like infirmitie, and as wise for themselves, as shee could be, though these the like sinister accidents might sometime crosse them: and gladly shee wished, that Herculanoes Wives excuse, might now serve to acquite her: but because in blaming others errours, our owne may sometime chance to escape discovery, and cleare us, albeit wee are as guilty; in a sharpe reprehending manner, thus shee began. See Husband, heere is hansome behaviour, of an holy faire-seeming, and Saint-like woman, to whom I durst have confest my sinnes, I conceived such a religious perswasion of her lives integrety, free from the least scruple of taxation. A woman, so farre stept into yeeres, as shee is, to give such an evill example to younger women, is it not a sinne beyond all sufferance? Accursed be the houre, when she was borne into this World, and her selfe likewise, to bee so lewdly and incontinently given; an universall shame and slaunder, to all the good women of our City.

Shall I tearme her a woman, or rather some savage monster in a womans shape? Hath shee not made an open prostitution of her honesty, broken her plighted faith to her Husband, and all the womanly reputation shee had in this World? Her Husband, being an honourable Citizen, entreating her alwayes, as few men else in the City doe their wives; what an heart-breake must this needes bee to him, good man? Neither I, nor any honest man else, ought to have any pity on her, but (with our owne hands) teare her in peeces, or dragge her along to a good fire in the Market place, wherein she and her minion should be consumed together, and their base ashes dispersed abroad in the winde, least the pure Aire should be infected with them.

Then, remembring her owne case, and her poore affrighted friend, who lay in such distresse under the Hen-coope; she began to advise her Husband, that he would be pleased to go to bed, because the night passed on apace. But Pedro, having a better will to eate, then to sleepe, desired her to let him have some meate, else hee must goe to bed with an empty bellie; whereto shee answered. Why Husband (quoth shee) doe I make any large provision, when I am debard of your company? I would I were the Wife of Herculano, seeing you cannot content your selfe from one nights feeding, considering, it is now over-late to make any thing ready.

It fortuned, that certaine Husbandmen, which had the charge of Pedroes Farmehouse in the Countrey, and there followed his affaires of Husbandry, were returned home this instant night, having their Asses laden with such provision, as was to bee used in his City-house. When the Asses were unladen, and set up in a small Stable, without watering; one off them being (belike) more thirsty then the rest, brake loose, and wandering all about smelling to seeke water, happened into the entry, where the young man lay hidden under the Hen pen. Now, hee being constrained (like a Carpe) to lye flat on his belly, because the Coope was over-weighty for him to carry, and one of his hands more extended foorth, then was requisite for him in so urgent a shift: it was his hap (or ill fortune rather) that the Asse set his foote on the young mans fingers, treading so hard, and the paine being very irkesome to him, as hee was enforced to cry out aloude: which Pedro hearing, he wondered thereat not a little.

Knowing that this cry was in his house, hee tooke the Candle in his hand, and going foorth of the Parlour, heard the cry to be louder; because the Asse removed not his foote, but rather trod the more firmely on his hand. Comming to the Coope, driving the Asse, and taking off the old sacke, he espyed the young man, who, beside the painefull anguish he felt of his fingers, arose up trembling, as fearing some outrage beside to bee offered him by Pedro, who knew the youth perfectly, and demaunded of him, how he came thither. No answere did hee make to that question, but humbly entreated (for charities sake) that hee would not doe him any harme. Feare not (quoth Pedro) I will not offer thee any violence: onely tell mee how thou camest hither, and for what occasion; wherein the youth fully resolved him.

Pedro being no lesse joyfull for thus finding him, then his Wife was sorrowfull, tooke him by the hand, and brought him into the Parlour, where shee sate trembling and quaking, as not knowing what to say in this distresse. Seating himselfe directly before her, and holding the youth still fast by the hand, thus hee began. Oh Wife! What bitter speeches did you use (even now) against the Wife of Herculano, maintaining that shee had shamed all other women, and justly deserved to be burned? Why did you not say as much of your selfe? Or, if you had not the heart to speake, how could you bee so cruell against her, knowing your offence as great as hers? Questionlesse, nothing else urged you thereto, but that all women are of one and the same condition, covering their owne grosse faults by farre inferiour infirmities in others. You are a perverse generation, meerely false in your fairest shewes.

When she saw that he offered her no other violence, but gave her such vaunting and reproachfull speeches, holding still the young man before her face, meerely vexe and despight her: shee began to take heart, and thus replied. Doest thou compare mee with the Wife of Herculano, who is an old, dissembling hypocrite? Yet she can have of him whatsoever shee desireth, and he useth her as a woman ought to be, which favour I could never yet finde at thy hands. Put the case, that thou keepest me in good garments; allowing mee to goe neatly hosed and shod; yet well thou knowest, there are other meere matters belonging to a woman, and every way as necessarily required, both for the preservation of Houshold quietnesse, and those other rites betweene a Husband and Wife. Let mee be worser garmented, courser dieted, yea, debarred of all pleasure and delights; so I might once be worthy the name of a Mother, and leave some remembrance of woman-hood behinde me. I tell thee plainely Pedro, I am a woman as others are, and subject to the same desires, as (by nature) attendeth on flesh and blood: looke how thou failest in kindnesse towards me, thinke it not amisse, if I doe the like to thee, and endeavour thou to win the worthy title of a Father, because I was made to be a Mother.

When Pedro perceived, that his Wife had spoken nothing but reason, in regard of his over-much neglect towards her, and not using such Houshold kindnesse, as ought to be betweene Man and Wife, hee returned her this answer. Well Wife (quoth he) I confesse my fault, and hereafter will labour to amend it; conditionally, that this youth, nor any other, may no more visite my House in my absence. Get me therefore something to eate, for doubtlesse, this young man and thy selfe fell short of your Supper, by reason of my so soone returning home. In troth Husband, saide she, we did not eate one bit of any thing, and I will be a true and loyall Wife to thee, so thou wilt be the like to me. No more words then Wife, replyed Pedro, all is forgotten and forgiven, let us to Supper, and we are all friends. She seeing his anger was so well appeased, lovingly kissed him, and laying the cloth, set on the supper, which she had provided for her selfe and the youth, and so they supt together merrily, not one unkinde word passing betweene them. After Supper, the youth was sent away in friendly manner, and Pedro was alwayes afterward more loving to his Wife, then formerly hee had beene, and no complaint passed on either side, but mutuall joy and Houshold contentment, such as ought to bee betweene Man and Wife.

Dioneus having ended this his Tale, for which the Ladies returned him no thankes, but rather angerly frowned on him: the Queene, knowing that her government was now concluded, arose, and taking off her Crowne of Lawrell, placed it graciously on the head of Madame Eliza, saying. Now Madame, it is your turne to commaund. Eliza having received the honour, did (in all respects) as others formerly had done, and after shee had enstructed the Master of the Houshold, concerning his charge during the time of her Regiment, for contentation of all the company; thus shee spake.

We have long since heard, that with witty words, ready answeres and sudden jests or taunts, many have checkt and reproved great folly in others, and to their no meane owne commendation. Now, because it is a pleasing kinde of argument, ministring occasion of mirth and wit: my desire is, that all our discourse to morrow shall tend thereto. I meane of such persons, either Men or Women, who with some sudden witty answere, have encountred a scorner in his owne intention, and layed the blame where it justly belonged. Every one commended the Queenes appointment, because it savoured of good wit and judgement; and the Queene being risen, they were all discharged till supper time, falling to such severall exercises as themselves best fancyed.

When Supper was ended, and the instruments layed before them; by the Queenes consent, Madam Æmilia undertooke the daunce, and the Song was appointed to Dioneus, who began many, but none that proved to any liking, they were so palpably obscœne and idle, savouring altogether of his owne wanton disposition. At the length, the Queene looking stearnely on him, and commanding him to sing a good one, or none at all; thus he began.

THE SONG

Eyes, can ye not refraine your hourely weeping?
Eares, how are you depriv'd of sweete attention?
Thoughts, have you lost your quiet silent sleeping?
Wit, who hath rob'd thee of thy rare invention?
  The lacke of these, being life and motion giving:
  Are senselesse shapes, and no true signes of living.

Eyes, when you gaz'd upon her Angell beauty;
Eares, while you heard her sweete delitious straines,
Thoughts (sleeping then) did yet performe their duty,
Wit, tooke sprightly pleasure in his paines.
  While shee did live, then none of these were scanting,
  But now (being dead) they all are gone, and wanting.

After that Dioneus (by proceeding no further) declared the finishing of his Song; many more were sung beside, and that of Dioneus highly commended. Some part of the night being spent in other delightfull exercises, and a fitting houre for rest drawing on: they betooke themselves to their Chambers, where we will leave them till to morrow morning.

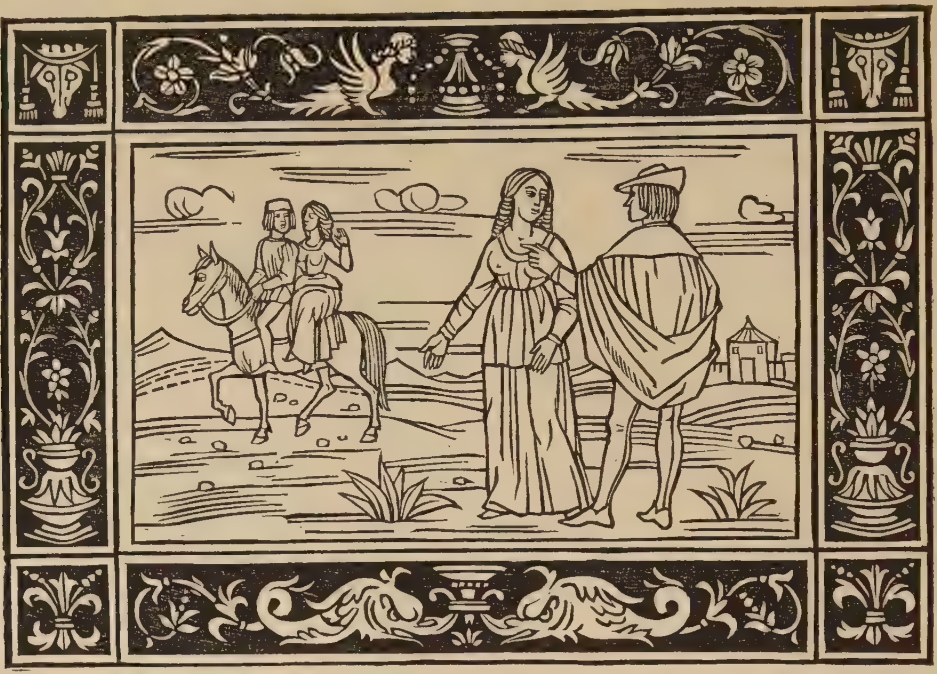
GOVERNED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF MADAM ELIZA, AND THE ARGUMENT OF THE DISCOURSES OR NOVELS THERE TO BE RECOUNTED, DOE CONCERNE SUCH PERSONS; WHO BY SOME WITTY WORDS (WHEN ANY HAVE CHECKT OR TAUNTED THEM) HAVE REVENGED THEMSELVES, IN A SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED AND DISCREET ANSWERE, THEREBY PREVENTING LOSSE, DANGER, SCORNE AND DISGRACE, RETORTING THEM ON THE BUSI-HEADED QUESTIONERS.

THE Moone having past the heaven, lost her bright splendor, by the arising of a more powerfull light, and every part of our world began to looke cleare: when the Queene (being risen) caused all the Company to be called, walking forth afterward upon the pearled dewe (so farre as was supposed convenient) in faire and familiar conference together, according as severally they were disposed, and repetition of divers the passed Novels, especially those which were most pleasing, and seemed so by their present commendations. But the Sunne beeing somewhat higher mounted, gave such a sensible warmth to the ayre, as caused their returne backe to the Pallace, where the Tables were readily covered against their comming, strewed with sweete hearbes and odoriferous flowers, seating themselves at the Tables (before the heat grew more violent) according as the Queene commanded.

After dinner, they sung divers excellent Canzonnets, and then some went to sleepe, others played at the Chesse, and some at the Tables: But Dioneus and Madam Lauretta, they sung the love-conflict betweene Troylus and Cressida. Now was the houre come, of repairing to their former Consistory or meeting place, the Queene having thereto generally summoned them, and seating themselves (as they were wont to doe) about the faire fountaine. As the Queene was commanding to begin the first Novell, an accident suddenly happened, which never had befalne before: to wit, they heard a great noyse and tumult, among the houshold servants in the Kitchin. Whereupon, the Queene caused the Master of the Houshold to be called, demaunding of him, what noyse it was, and what might be the occasion thereof? He made answere, that Lacisca and Tindaro were at some words of discontentment, but what was the occasion thereof, he knew not. Whereupon, the Queene commanded that they should be sent for, (their anger and violent speeches still continuing) and being come into her presence, she demaunded the reason of their discord; and Tindaro offering to make answere, Lacisca (being somewhat more ancient then he, and of a fiercer fiery spirit, even as if her heart would have leapt out of her mouth) turned her selfe to him, and with a scornefull frowning countenance, said. See how this bold, unmannerly and beastly fellow, dare presume to speake in this place before me: Stand by (saucy impudence) and give your better leave to answere; then turning to the Queene, thus shee proceeded.

Madam, this idle fellow would maintaine to me, that Signior Sicophanto marrying with Madama della Grazza, had the victory of her virginity the very first night; and I avouched the contrary, because shee had been a mother twise before, in very faire adventuring of her fortune. And he dared to affirme beside, that yong Maides are so simple, as to loose the flourishing Aprill of their time, in meere feare of their parents, and great prejudice of their friends.

And then the Queene, somewhat offended at the folly of the former controversie, commanded Madame Philomena, that she should give beginning to the dayes Novels: which (in dutifull manner) shee undertooke to doe, and seating her selfe in formall fashion, with modest and very gracious gesture, thus she began.



REPREHENDING THE FOLLY OF SUCH MEN, AS UNDERTAKE TO REPORT DISCOURSES, WHICH ARE BEYOND THEIR WIT AND CAPACITY, AND GAINE NOTHING BUT BLAME FOR THEIR LABOUR.

A KNIGHT *requested Madam Oretta, to ride behinde him on horse-backe, and promised, to tell her an excellent Tale by the way. But the Lady perceiving, that his discourse was idle, and much worse delivered: entreated him to let her walke on foote againe.*

GRACIOUS Ladies, like as in our faire, cleere, and serene seasons, the Starres are bright ornaments to the heavens, and the flowry fields (so long as the spring time lasteth) weare their goodliest Liveries, the Trees likewise bragging in their best adornings: Even so at friendly meetings, short, sweet, and sententious words, are the beauty and ornament of any discourse, savouring of wit and sound judgement, worthily deserving to be commended. And so much the rather, because in few and witty words, aptly suting with the time and occasion, more is delivered then was expected, or sooner answered, then rashly apprehended: which, as they become men verie highly, yet do they shew more singular in women.

True it is, what the occasion may be, I know not, either by the badnesse of our wittes, or the especiall enmitie betweene our complexions and the celestiall bodies: there are scarsely any, or very few Women to be found among us, that well knowes how to deliver a word, when it should and ought to be spoken; or, if a question bee mooved, understands to suite it with an apt answere, such as conveniently is required, which is no meane disgrace to us women. But in regard, that Madame Pampinea hath already spoken sufficiently of this matter, I meane not to presse it any further: but at this time it shall satisfie mee, to let you know, how wittily a Ladie made due observation of opportunitie, in answering of a Knight, whose talke seemed tedious and offensive to her.

No doubt there are some among you, who either do know, or (at the least) have heard, that it is no long time since, when there dwelt a Gentlewoman in our Citie, of excellent grace and good discourse, with all other rich endowments of Nature remaining in her, as pitty it were to conceale her name: and therefore let me tell ye, that shee was called Madame Oretta, the Wife to Signior Geri Spina. She being upon some occasion (as now we are) in the Countrey, and passing from place to place (by way of neighbourly invitations) to visite her loving Friends and Acquaintance, accompanied with divers Knights and Gentlewomen, who on the day before had dined and supt at her house, as now (belike) the selfe-same courtesie was intended to her: walking along with her company upon the way; and the place for her welcome beeing further off then she expected; a Knight chanced to overtake this faire troop, who well knowing Madam Oretta, using a kinde and courteous salutation, spake thus:

Madam, this foot travell may bee offensive to you, and were you so well pleased as my selfe, I would ease your journey behinde mee on my Gelding, even so farre as you shall command me: and beside, wil shorten your wearinesse with a Tale worth the hearing. Courteous Sir (replyed the Lady) I embrace your kinde offer with such acceptation, that I pray you to performe it; for therein you shall doe me an especiall favour. The Knight, whose Sword (perhappes) was as unsuteable to his side, as his wit out of fashion for any readie discourse, having the Lady mounted behinde him: rode on with a gentle pace, and (according to his promise) began to tell a Tale, which indeede (of it selfe) deserved attention, because it was a knowne and commendable History, but yet delivered so abruptly, with idle repetitions of some particulars three or foure severall times, mistaking one thing for another, and wandering erroneously from the essentiall subject, seeming neere an end, and then beginning againe: that a poore Tale could not possibly be more mangled, or worse tortured in telling, then this was; for the persons therein concerned, were so abusively nicke-named, their actions and speeches so monstrously mishapen, that nothing could appeare to be more ugly.

Madame Oretta, being a Lady of unequalled ingenuitie, admirable in judgement, and most delicate in her speech, was afflicted in soule, beyond all measure; overcome with many colde sweates, and passionate heart-aking qualmes, to see a Foole thus in a Pinne-fold, and unable to get out, albeit the doore stood wide open to him, whereby shee became so sicke; that, converting her distaste to a kinde of pleasing acceptation, merrily thus she spake. Beleeve me Sir, your horse trots so hard, and travels so uneasily; that I entreate you to let me walke on foot againe.

The Knight, being (perchance) a better understander, then a Discourser; perceived by this witty taunt, that his Bowle had run a contrarie bias, and he as farre out of Tune, as he was from the Towne. So, lingering the time, untill her company was neerer arrived: hee lefte her with them, and rode on as his Wisedome could best direct him.

THE SECOND NOVELL

APPROVING, THAT A REQUEST OUGHT TO BE CIVILL, BEFORE IT SHOULD BE GRANTED TO ANY ONE WHATSOEVER.

CISTIO *a Baker, by a wittie answer which he gave unto Messer Geri Spina, caused him to acknowledge a very indiscreete motion, which he had made to the said Cistio.*

THE words of Madame Oretta, were much commended by the men and women; and the discourse being ended, the Queene gave command to Madam Pampinea, that shee should follow next in order, which made her to begin in this manner.

Worthy Ladies, it exceedeth the power of my capacitie, to censure in the case whereof I am to speake, by saying, who sinned most, either Nature, in seating a Noble soule in a vile body, or Fortune, in bestowing on a body (beautified with a noble soule) a base or wretched condition of life. As we may observe by Cistio, a Citizen of our owne, and many more beside; for, this Cistio beeing endued with a singular good spirit, Fortune hath made him no better then a Baker. And beleeve me Ladies, I could (in this case) lay as much blame on Nature, as on Fortune; if I did not know Nature to be most absolutely wise, and that Fortune hath a thousand eyes, albeit fooles have figured her to bee blinde. But, upon more mature and deliberate consideration, I finde, that they both (being truly wise and judicious) have dealt justly, in imitation of our best advised mortals, who being uncertaine of such inconveniences, as may happen unto them, do bury (for their own benefit) the very best and choicest things of esteeme, in the most vile and abject places of their houses, as being subject to least suspition, and where they may be sure to have them at all times, for supply of any necessitie whatsoever, because so base a conveyance hath better kept them, then the very best chamber in the house could have done. Even so these two great commanders of the world, do many times hide their most precious Jewels of worth, under the clouds of Arts or professions of worst estimation, to the end, that fetching them thence when neede requires, their splendor may appeare to be the more glorious. Nor was any such matter noted in our homely Baker Cistio, by the best observation of Messer Geri Spina, who was spoken of in the late repeated Novell, as being the husband to Madame Oretta; whereby this accident came to my remembrance, and which (in a short Tale) I will relate unto you.

Let me then tell ye, that Pope Boniface (with whom the fore-named Messer Geri Spina was in great regard) having sent divers Gentlemen of his Court to Florence as Ambassadors, about very serious and important businesse: they were lodged in the house of Messer Geri Spina, and he employed (with them) in the saide Popes negotiation. It chanced, that as being the most convenient way for passage, every morning they walked on foot by the Church of Saint Marie d'Ughi, where Cistio the Baker dwelt, and exercised the trade belonging to him. Now although Fortune had humbled him to so meane a condition, yet shee added a blessing of wealth to that contemptible quality, and (as smiling on him continually) no disasters at any time befell him, but still he flourished in riches, lived like a jolly Citizen, with all things fitting for honest entertainment about him, and plenty of the best Wines (both White and Claret) as Florence, or any part thereabout yeelded.

Our frolicke Baker perceiving, that Messer Geri Spina and the other Ambassadors, used every morning to passe by his doore, and afterward to returne backe the same way: seeing the season to be somewhat hot and soultry, he tooke it as an action of kindnesse and courtesie, to make them an offer of tasting his white wine. But having respect to his owne meane degree, and the condition of Messer Geri: hee thought it farre unfitting for him, to be so forward in such presumption; but rather entred into consideration of some such meanes, whereby Messer Geri might bee the inviter of himselfe to taste his Wine. And having put on him a trusse or thin doublet, of very white and fine Linnen cloath, as also breeches, and an apron of the same, and a white cap upon his head, so that he seemed rather to be a Miller, then a Baker: at such times as Messer Geri and the Ambassadors should daily passe by, hee set before his doore a new Bucket of faire water, and another small vessell of Bologna earth (as new and sightly as the other) full of his best and choisest white Wine, with two small Glasses, looking like silver, they were so cleare. Downe he sate, with all this provision before him, and emptying his stomacke twice or thrice, of some clotted flegmes which seemed to offend it: even as the Gentlemen were passing by, he dranke one or two rouses of his Wine so heartily, and with such a pleasing appetite, as might have moved a longing (almost) in a dead man.

Messer Geri well noting his behaviour, and observing the verie same course in him two mornings together; on the third day (as he was drinking) he said unto him. Well done Cistio, what, is it good, or no? Cistio starting up, forthwith replyed: Yes Sir, the wine is good indeed, but how can I make you to beleeve me, except you taste of it? Messer Geri, eyther in regard of the times quality, or by reason of his paines taken, perhaps more then ordinary, or else, because hee saw Cistio had drunke so sprightly, was very desirous to taste of the Wine, and turning unto the Ambassadors, in merriment he saide. My Lords, me thinks it were not much amisse, if we tooke a taste of this honest mans Wine, perhaps it is so good, that we shall not neede to repent our labour.

Heereupon, he went with them to Cistio, who had caused an handsome seate to be fetched forth of his house, whereon he requested them to sit downe, and having commanded his men to wash cleane the Glasses, he saide. Fellowes, now get you gone, and leave me to the performance of this service; for I am no worse a skinker, then a Baker, and tarry you never so long, you shall not drinke a drop. Having thus spoken, himselfe washed foure or five small glasses, faire and new, and causing a Viall of his best wine to be brought him: hee diligently filled it out to Messer Geri and the Ambassadours, to whom it seemed the very best Wine, that they had drunke of in a long while before. And having given Cistio most hearty thankes for his kindnesse, and the Wine his due commendation: many dayes afterwardes (so long as they continued there) they found the like courteous entertainment, and with the good liking of honest Cistio.

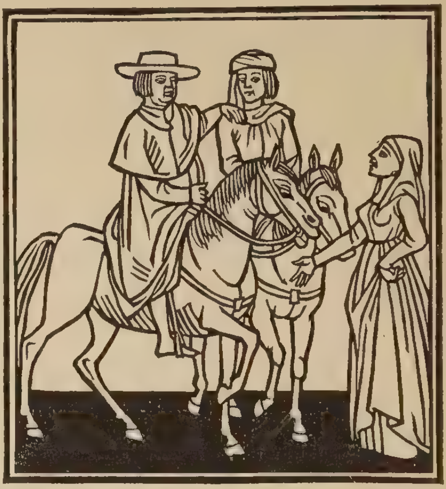
But when the affayres were fully concluded, for which they wer thus sent to Florence, and their parting preparation in due readinesse: Messer Geri made a very sumptuous Feast for them, inviting thereto the most part of the honourablest Citizens, and Cistio to be one amongst them; who (by no meanes) would bee seene in an assembly of such State and pompe, albeit he was thereto (by the saide Messer Geri) most earnestly entreated.

In regard of which deniall, Messer Geri commaunded one of his servants, to take a small Bottle, and request Cistio to fill it with his good Wine; then afterward, to serve it in such sparing manner to the Table, that each Gentleman might be allowed halfe a glasse-full at their down-sitting. The Serving-man, who had heard great report of the Wine, and was halfe offended, because he could never taste thereof: tooke a great Flaggon Bottle, containing foure or five Gallons at the least, and comming there-with unto Cistio, saide unto him. Cistio, because my Master cannot have your companie among his friends, he prayes you to fill this Bottle with your best Wine. Cistio looking uppon the huge Flaggon, replyed thus. Honest Fellow, Messer Geri never sent thee with such a Message to me: which although the Serving-man very stoutly maintained, yet getting no other answer, he returned backe therwith to his Master.

Messer Geri returned the Servant backe againe unto Cistio, saying: Goe, and assure Cistio, that I sent thee to him, and if hee make thee any more such answeres, then demaund of him, to what place else I should send thee? Being come againe to Cistio, hee avouched that his Maister had sent him, but Cistio affirming, that hee did not: the Servant asked, to what place else hee should send him? Marrie (quoth Cistio) unto the River of Arno, which runneth by Florence, there thou mayest be sure to fill thy Flaggon. When the Servant had reported this answer to Messer Geri, the eyes of his understanding beganne to open, and calling to see what Bottle hee had carried with him: no sooner looked he on the huge Flaggon, but severely reproving the sawcinesse of his Servant, hee sayde. Now trust mee, Cistio told thee nothing but trueth, for neither did I send thee with any such dishonest message, nor had the reason to yeeld or grant it.

Then he sent him with a bottle of more reasonable competencie, which so soone as Cistio saw: Yea mary my friend, quoth he, now I am sure that thy Master sent thee to me, and he shall have his desire with all my hart. So, commaunding the Bottle to be filled, he sent it away by the Servant, and presently following after him, when he came unto Messer Geri, he spake unto him after this maner. Sir, I would not have you to imagine, that the huge flaggon (which first came) did any jotte dismay mee; but rather I conceyved, that the small Viall whereof you tasted every morning, yet filled many mannerly Glasses together, was fallen quite out of your remembrance; in plainer tearmes, it beeing no Wine for Groomes or Peazants, as your selfe affirmed yesterday. And because I meane to bee a Skinker no longer, by keeping Wine to please any other pallate but mine owne: I have sent you halfe my store, and heereafter thinke of mee as you shall please. Messer Geri tooke both his guifte and speeches in most thankefull manner, accepting him alwayes after, as his intimate Friend, because he had so graced him before the Ambassadours.

THE THIRD NOVELL



WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT MOCKERS DO SOMETIMES MEETE WITH THEIR MATCHES IN MOCKERY, AND TO THEIR OWNE SHAME.

MADAME *Nonna de Pulci, by a sodaine answere, did put to silence a Byshop of Florence, and the Lord Marshall: having moved a question to the said Lady, which seemed to come short of honesty.*

WHEN Madame Pampinea had ended her Discourse, and (by the whole company) the answere and bounty of Cistio, had past with deserved commendation: it pleased the Queene, that Madame Lauretta should next succeed: whereupon verie chearefully thus she beganne.

Faire assembly, Madame Pampinea (not long time since) gave beginning, and Madam Philomena hath also seconded the same argument, concerning the slender vertue remaining in our sexe, and likewise the beautie of wittie words, delivered on apt occasion, and in convenient meetings. Now, because it is needlesse to proceede any further, then what hath beene already spoken: let mee onely tell you (over and beside) and commit it to memorie, that the nature of meetings and speeches are such, as they ought to nippe or touch the hearer, like unto the Sheepes nibling on the tender grasse, and not as the sullen Dogge byteth. For, if their biting be answereable to the Dogges, they deserve not to be termed witty jests or quips, but foule and offensive language: as plainly appeareth by the words of Madame Oretta, and the mery, yet sensible answer of Cistio.

True it is, that if it be spoken by way of answer, and the answerer biteth doggedly, because himselfe was bitten in the same manner before: he is the lesse to bee blamed, because hee maketh payment but with coine of the same stampe. In which respect, an especiall care is to bee had, how, when, with whom, and where we jest or gibe, whereof very many proove too unmindfull, as appeared (not long since) by a Prelate of ours, who met with a byting, no lesse sharpe and bitter, then had first come from himselfe before, as verie briefely I intend to tell you how.

Messer Antonio d'Orso, being Byshoppe of Florence, a vertuous, wise, and reverend Prelate; it fortuned that a Gentleman of Catalogna, named Messer Diego de la Ratta, and Lord Marshall to King Robert of Naples, came thither to visite him. Hee being a man of very comely personage, and a great observer of the choysest beauties in Court: among all the other Florentine Dames, one proved to bee most pleasing in his eye, who was a verie faire Woman indeede, and Neece to the Brother of the saide Messer Antonio.

The Husband of this Gentlewoman (albeit descended of a worthie Family) was, neverthelesse, immeasurably covetous, and a verie vile harsh natured man. Which the Lord Marshall understanding, made such a madde composition with him, as to give him five hundred Ducates of Gold, on condition, that hee would let him lye one night with his wife, not thinking him so base minded as to give consent. Which in a greedy avaritious humour he did, and the bargaine being absolutely agreed on; the Lord Marshall prepared to fit him with a payment, such as it should be. He caused so many peeces of silver to be cunningly guilded, as then went for currant mony in Florence, and called Popolines, and after he had lyen with the Lady (contrary to her will and knowledge, her husband had so closely carried the businesse) the money was duely paid to the cornuted Coxcombe. Afterwards, this impudent shame chanced to be generally knowne, nothing remaining to the wilful Wittoll, but losse of his expected gaine, and scorne in every place where he went. The Bishop likewise (beeing a discreete and sober man) would seeme to take no knowledge thereof; but bare out all scoffes with a well setled countenance.

Within a short while after, the Bishop and the Lord Marshal (alwaies conversing together) it came to passe, that upon Saint Johns day, they riding thorow the City, side by side, and viewing the brave beauties, which of them might best deserve to win the prize: the Byshop espied a yong married Lady (which our late greevous pestilence bereaved us of) she being named Madame Nonna de Pulci, and Cousine to Messer Alexio Rinucci, a Gentleman well knowne unto us all. A very goodly beautifull yong woman she was, of delicate language, and singular spirite, dwelling close by S. Peters gate. This Lady did the Bishop shew to the Marshall, and when they were come to her, laying his hand uppon her shoulder, he said. Madam Nonna, What thinke you of this Gallant? Dare you adventure another wager with him?

Such was the apprehension of this witty Lady, that these words seemed to taxe her honour, or else to contaminate the hearers understanding, whereof there were great plenty about her, whose judgement might be as vile, as the speeches were scandalous. Wherefore, never seeking for any further purgation of her cleare conscience, but onely to retort taunt for taunt, presently thus she replied. My Lord, if I should make such a vile adventure, I would looke to bee payde with better money.

These words being heard both by the Bishop and Marshall, they felt themselves touched to the quicke, the one, as the Factor or Broker, for so dishonest a businesse, to the Brother of the Bishop; and the other, as receiving (in his owne person) the shame belonging to his Brother. So, not so much as looking each on other, or speaking one word together all the rest of that day, they rode away with blushing cheekes. Whereby we may collect, that the yong Lady, being so injuriously provoked, did no more then well became her, to bite their basenesse neerely, that so abused her openly.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

WHEREBY PLAINLY APPEARETH, THAT A SODAINE WITTY AND MERRY ANSWER, DOTH OFTENTIMES APPEASE THE FURIOUS CHOLLER OF AN ANGRY MAN.

Chichibio, *the Cooke to Messer Currado Gianfiliazzi, by a sodaine pleasant answer which he made to his Master; converted his anger into laughter, and thereby escaped the punishment, that Messer meant to impose on him.*

Madam Lauretta sitting silent, and the answer of Lady Nonna having past with generall applause: the Queene commanded Madame Neiphila to follow next in order; who instantly thus began. Although a ready wit (faire Ladies) doth many times affoord worthy and commendable speeches, according to the accidents happening to the speaker: yet notwithstanding, Fortune (being a ready helper divers wayes to the timorous) doth often tippe the tongue with such a present reply, as the partie to speake, had not so much leysure as to thinke on, nor yet to invent; as I purpose to let you perceive, by a prety short Novell.

Messer Currado Gianfiliazzi (as most of you have both seene and knowen) living alwayes in our Citie, in the estate of a Noble Citizen, beeing a man bountifull, magnificent, and within the degree of Knighthoode: continually kept both Hawkes and Hounds, taking no meane delight in such pleasures as they yeelded, neglecting (for them) farre more serious imployments, wherewith our present subject presumeth not to meddle. Upon a day, having kilde with his Faulcon a Crane, neere to a Village called Peretola, and finding her to be both young and fat, he sent it to his Cooke, a

Venetian borne, and named Chichibio, with command to have it prepared for his supper. Chichibio, who resembled no other, then (as he was indeede) a plaine, simple, honest mery fellow, having drest the Crane as it ought to bee, put it on the spit, and laide it to the fire.

When it was well neere fully roasted, and gave forth a very delicate pleasing savour; it fortuned that a young Woman dwelling not far off, named Brunetta, and of whom Chichibio was somewhat enamored, entred into the Kitchin, and feeling the excellent smell of the Crane, to please her beyond all savours, that ever she had felt before: she entreated Chichibio verie earnestly, that hee would bestow a legge thereof on her. Whereto Chichibio (like a pleasant companion, and evermore delighting in singing) sung her this answer.

My Brunetta, faire and feat a,
   Why should you say so?
The meate of my Master,
Allowes you for no Taster,
   Go from the Kitchin go.

Many other speeches past betweene them in a short while, but in the end, Chichibio, because hee would not have his Mistresse Brunetta angrie with him; cut away one of the Cranes legges from the spit, and gave it to her to eate. Afterward, when the Fowle was served up to the Table before Messer Currado, who had invited certain strangers his friends to sup with him, wondering not a little, he called for Chichibio his Cook; demanding what was become of the Cranes other legge? Whereto the Venetian (being a lyar by Nature) sodainely answered: Sir, Cranes have no more but one legge each Bird. Messer Currado, growing verie angry, replyed. Wilt thou tell me, that a Crane hath no more but one legge? Did I never see a Crane before this? Chichibio persisting resolutely in his deniall, saide. Beleeve me Sir, I have told you nothing but the truth, and when you please, I wil make good my wordes, by such Fowles as are living.

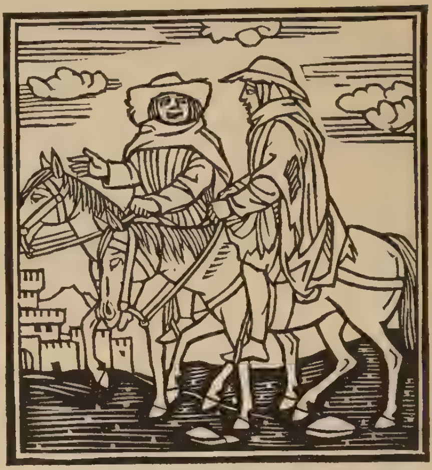
Messer Currado, in kinde love to the strangers that hee had invited to supper, gave over any further contestation; onely he said. Seeing thou assurest me, to let me see thy affirmation for truth, by other of the same Fowles living (a thing which as yet I never saw, or heard of) I am content to make proofe thereof to morrow morning, till then I shall rest satisfied: but, upon my word, if I finde it otherwise, expect such a sound payment, as thy knavery justly deserveth, to make thee remember it all thy life time. The contention ceassing for the night season, Messer Currado, who though he had slept well, remained still discontented in his minde: arose in the morning by breake of day, and puffing and blowing angerly, called for his horses, commanding Chichibio to mount on one of them; so riding on towards the River, where (earely every morning) he had seene plenty of Cranes, he sayde to his man; We shall see anon Sirra, whether thou or I lyed yesternight.

Chichibio perceiving, that his Masters anger was not (as yet) aswaged, and now it stood him upon, to make good his lye; not knowing how he should do it, rode after his Master, fearfully trembling all the way. Gladly he would have made an escape, but hee could not by any possible meanes, and on every side he looked about him, now before, and after behinde, to espy any Cranes standing on both their legges, which would have bin an ominous sight to him. But being come neere to the River, he chanced to see (before any of the rest) upon the banke thereof, about a dozen Cranes in number, each of them standing but upon one legge, as they use to do when they are sleeping. Whereupon, shewing them quickly to Messer Currado, he said. Now Sir your selfe may see, whether I told you true yesternight, or no: I am sure a Crane hath but one thigh, and one leg, as all here present are apparant witnesses, and I have bin as good as my promise.

Messer Currado looking on the Cranes, and well understanding the knavery of his man, replyed: Stay but a little while sirra, and I will shew thee, that a Crane hath two thighes, and two legges. Then riding somwhat neerer to them, he cryed out aloud, Shough, shough, which caused them to set downe their other legs, and all fled away, after they had made a few paces against the winde for their mounting. So going unto Chichibio, he said: How now you lying Knave, hath a Crane two legs, or no? Chichibio being well-neere at his wits end, not knowing now what answer hee should make; but even as it came sodainly into his minde, said: Sir, I perceive you are in the right, and if you would have done as much yesternight, and had cryed Shough, as here you did: questionlesse, the Crane would then have set down the other legge, as these heere did: but if (as they) she had fled away too, by that meanes you might have lost your Supper.

This sodaine and unexpected witty answere, comming from such a logger-headed Lout, and so seasonably for his owne safety: was so pleasing to Messer Currado, that he fell into a hearty laughter, and forgetting all anger, saide. Chichibio, thou hast quit thy selfe well, and to my contentment: albeit I advise thee, to teach mee no more such trickes heereafter. Thus Chichibio, by his sodaine and merry answer, escaped a sound beating, which (otherwise) his master had inflicted on him.

THE FIFT NOVELL



WHEREBY MAY BEE OBSERVED, THAT SUCH AS WILL SPEAKE CONTEMPTIBLY OF OTHERS, OUGHT (FIRST OF ALL) TO LOOKE RESPECTIVELY ON THEIR OWNE IMPERFECTIONS.

MESSER *Forese da Rabatte, and Maister Giotto, a Painter by his profession, comming together from Mugello, scornfully reprehended one another for their deformity of body.*

So soone as Madame Neiphila sate silent (the Ladies having greatly commended the pleasant answer of Chichibio) Pamphilus, by command from the Queene, spake in this manner. Woorthy Ladies, it commeth to passe oftentimes, that like as Fortune is observed divers wayes, to hide under vile and contemptible Arts, the most great and unvalewable treasures of vertue (as, not long since, was well discoursed unto us by Madame Pampinea:) so in like manner hath appeared; that Nature hath infused very singular spirits into most mishapen and deformed bodies of men. As hath beene noted in two of our owne Citizens, of whom I purpose to speake in fewe words. The one of them was named Messer Forese de Rabatta, a man of little and low person, but yet deformed in body, with a flat face, like a Terrier or Beagle, as if no comparison (almost) could bee made more ugly. But notwithstanding all this deformity, he was so singularly experienced in the Lawes, that all men held him beyond any equall, or rather reputed him as a Treasury of civill knowledge.

The other man, being named Giotto, had a spirit of so great excellency, as there was not any particular thing in Nature, the Mother and Worke-mistresse of all, by continuall motion of the heavens; but hee by his pen and pensell could perfectly portrait; shaping them all so truly alike and resemblable, that they were taken for the reall matters indeede; and, whether they were present or no, there was hardly any possibility of their distinguishing. So that many times it happened, that by the variable devises he made, the visible sence of men became deceived, in crediting those things to be naturall, which were but meerly painted. By which meanes, hee reduced that singular Art to light, which long time before had lyen buried, under the grosse error of some; who, in the mysterie of painting, delighted more to content the ignorant, then to please the judicious understanding of the wise, he justly deserving thereby, to be tearmed one of the Florentines most glorious lights. And so much the rather, because he performed all his actions, in the true and lowly spirit of humility: for while he lived, and was a Master in his Art, above all other Painters: yet he refused any such title, which shined the more majestically in him, as appeared by such, who knew much lesse then he, or his Schollers either: yet his knowledge was extreamly coveted among them.

Now, notwithstanding all this admirable excellency in him: he was not (thereby) a jot the handsommer man (either in person or countenance) then was our fore-named Lawyer Messer Forese, and therefore my Novell concerneth them both. Understand then (faire Assemblie) that the possessions and inheritances of Messer Forese and Giotto, lay in Mugello; wherefore, when Holy-dayes were celebrated by Order of Court, and in the Sommer time, upon the admittance of so apt a vacation; Forese rode thither upon a very unsightly Jade, such as a man can sildome meet with worse. The like did Giotto the Painter, as ill fitted every way as the other; and having dispatched their busines there, they both returned backe towards Florence, neither of them being able to boast, which was the best mounted.

Riding on a faire and softly pace, because their Horses could goe no faster: and they being well entred into yeeres, it fortuned (as oftentimes the like befalleth in Sommer) that a sodaine showre of raine overtooke them; for avoyding whereof, they made all possible haste to a poore Countreymans Cottage, familiarly knowne to them both. Having continued there an indifferent while, and the raine unlikely to cease: to prevent all further protraction of time, and to arrive at Florence in due season; they borrowed two old cloakes of the poore man, of over-worn and ragged Country gray, as also two hoodes of the like Complexion, (because the poore man had no better) which did more mishape them, then their owne ugly deformity, and made them notoriously flouted and scorned, by all that met or over-tooke them.

After they had ridden some distance of ground, much moyled and bemyred with their shuffling Jades, flinging the dirt every way about them, that well they might be termed two filthy companions: the raine gave over, and the evening looking somewhat cleare, they began to confer familiarly together. Messer Forese, riding a lofty French trot, everie step being ready to hoise him out of his saddle, hearing Giottos discreete answers to every ydle question he made (for indeede he was a very elegant speaker) began to peruse and surveigh him, even from the foote to the head, as we use to say. And perceiving him to be so greatly deformed, as no man could be worse, in his opinion: without any consideration of his owne mishaping as bad, or rather more unsightly then hee; in a scoffing laughing humour, hee saide. Giotto, doest thou imagine, that a stranger, who had never seene thee before, and should now happen into our companie, would beleeve thee to bee the best Painter in the world, as indeede thou art? Presently Giotto (without any further meditation) returned him this answere. Signior Forese, I think he might then beleeve it, when (beholding you) hee could imagine that you had learned your A. B. C. Which when Forese heard, he knew his owne error, and saw his payment returned in such Coine, as he sold his Wares for.

THE SIXTH NOVEL

MICHIELE *Scalza proves to some young men that the family of the Baronchi was the most noble in the world, for which he gets a good supper.*

MICHIELE Scalza, a young Florentine, had so facetious and productive a genius that the principal youth of Florence took a great deal of pleasure in and thought it an honour to enjoy his company. Being one day at Mont' Ughi with many gentlemen, the discussion happened to run upon the antiquity and nobility of the Florentine families. Some gave the preference to that of the Uberti, others to that of the Lamberti, everyone speaking, as people ordinarily do, according to their different humours and interests.

When Scalza heard what they all had to say, he smiling cried: "You are none of you in the right. I will maintain the family of the Baronchi to be the most ancient and noble not only in Florence but also in the whole world. All philosophers and such as can be supposed to know that family, I'm confident, are of my opinion; and that you may not mistake my meaning I must tell you I mean the Baronchi our neighbours, who dwell near Santa Maria Maggiore." They all presently fell a-laughing, and asked him whether he took them for people of the other world that they should not know the Baronchi as well as he.

"Gentlemen," says Scalza, "I am so far from taking you for people of the other world that I will lay any one of you a good supper enough for six on what I affirm, and be judged by whom you please."

The wager was laid, and they all agreed to leave the decision to Pietro di Florentino, who was then present. Everyone expected Scalza would lose, and began to laugh at him beforehand. He that was to determine the matter, being very judicious, first heard the reasons of the opposite party, and then asked Scalza how he could prove his assertion.

"I will prove it so sufficiently," says he, "that you shall all be thoroughly convinced. Gentlemen," says he, "by how much a family is most ancient by so much it is most noble. The family of the Baronchi is the most ancient in Florence, *ergo* it is the most noble. I have nothing, then, to prove but the antiquity of the Baronchi. This will appear in that Prometheus made them at the time that he first began to learn to paint, and made others after he was master of his art. To convince you of this, do but examine the figures of the one and the other: you'll find art and proportion in the composition of the one, whereas the others are but rough-drawn and imperfect. Among the Baronchi you'll meet with one with a long narrow face, another with a prodigiously broad one; one is flat-nosed, another has a nose that measures an ell; one has a long chin and jaws like an ass, another has his short and flat, and is monkey-faced. Nay, there are some of them that have but one eye either larger or lower than the others have. In a word, their faces for all the world resemble such as children make when they first begin to draw. Prometheus, you will allow, must be no great master when he made these figures, as I told you before; and consequently they must be more noble as they are more ancient."

So diverting an argument made them all to laugh heartily. The representation he gave of the Baronchi was so just and natural that they all agreed he had won; and nothing was heard for a full quarter of an hour but "Scalza has won!" and "The Baronchi are the most ancient and noble family in all Florence!"

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, OF WHAT WORTH IT IS TO CONFESSE A TRUETH, WITH A FACETIOUS AND WITTY EXCUSE.

MADAM *Phillippa, being accused by her Husband Rinaldo de Pugliese, because he tooke her in Adulterie, with a yong Gentleman named Lazarino de Guazzagliotri: caused her to bee cited before the Judge. From whom she delivered her selfe, by a sodaine, witty, and pleasant answer, and moderated a severe strict Statute, formerly made against women.*

AFTER that Madame Fiammetta had given over speaking, and all the Auditory had sufficiently applauded the Schollers honest revenge, the Queene enjoyned Philostratus, to proceede on next with his Novell, which caused him to begin thus. Beleeve me Ladies, it is an excellent and most commendable thing, to speak well, and to all purposes: but I hold it a matter of much greater worth, to know how to do it, and when necessity doth most require it. Which a Gentlewoman (of whom I am now to speake) was so well enstructed in, as not onely it yeelded the hearers mirthfull contentment, but likewise delivered her from the danger of death, as (in few words) you shal heare related.

In the Citie of Pirato, there was an Edict or Statute, no lesse blameworthy (to speake uprightly) then most severe and cruell, which (without making any distinction) gave strict command; That everie Woman should be burned with fire, whose husband found her in the acte of Adultery, with any secret or familiar friend, as one deserving to bee thus abandoned, like such as prostituted their bodies to publike sale or hire. During the continuance of this sharpe Edict, it fortuned that a Gentlewoman, who was named Phillippa, was found in her Chamber one night, in the armes of a yong Gentleman of the same City, named Lazarino de Guazzagliotri, and by her owne husband, called Rinaldo de Pugliese, shee loving the young Gallant, as her owne life, because hee was most compleate in all perfections, and every way as deerely addicted to her.

This sight was so irkesome to Rinaldo, that, being overcom with extreame rage, hee could hardly containe from running on them, with a violent intent to kill them both: but feare of his owne life caused his forbearance, meaning to be revenged by some better way. Such was the heate of his spleene and fury, as, setting aside all respect of his owne shame: he would needs prosecute the rigour of the deadly Edict, which he held lawfull for him to do, although it extended to the death of his Wife. Heereupon, having witnesses sufficient, to approove the guiltinesse of her offence: a day being appointed (without desiring any other counsell) he went in person to accuse her, and required justice against her.

The Gentlewoman, who was of an high

and undauntable spirite, as all such are, who have fixed their affection resolvedly, and love uppon a grounded deliberation: concluded, quite against the counsell and opinion of her Parents, Kindred, and Friends; to appeare in the Court, as desiring rather to dye, by confessing the trueth with a manly courage, then by denying it, and her love unto so worthy a person as he was, in whose arms she chanced to be taken; to live basely in exile with shame, as an eternall scandall to her race. So, before the Potestate, shee made her apparance, worthily accompanied both with men and women, all advising her to deny the acte: but she, not minding them or their perswasions, looking on the Judge with a constant countenance, and a voyce of setled resolve, craved to know of him, what hee demaunded of her?

The Potestate well noting her brave carriage, her singular beautie and praiseworthy parts, her words apparantly witnessing the heighth of her minde: beganne to take compassion on her, and doubted, least shee would confesse some such matter, as should enforce him to pronounce the sentence of death against her. But she boldly scorning all delayes, or any further protraction of time; demanded again, what was her accusation? Madame, answered the Potestate, I am sory to tel you, what needs I must, your husband (whom you see present heere) is the complainant against you, avouching, that he tooke you in the act of adultery with another man: and therefore he requireth, that, according to the rigour of the Statute heere in force with us, I should pronounce sentence against you, and (consequently) the infliction of death. Which I cannot do, if you confesse not the fact, and therefore be well advised, how you answer me, and tell me the truth, if it be as your Husband accuseth you, or no.

The Lady, without any dismay or dread at all, pleasantly thus replied. My Lord, true it is, that Rinaldo is my Husband, and that he found me, on the night named, betweene the Armes of Lazarino, where many times heeretofore he hath embraced mee, according to the mutuall love re-plighted together, which I deny not, nor ever will. But you know well enough, and I am certaine of it, that the Lawes enacted in any Countrey, ought to be common, and made with consent of them whom they concerne, which in this Edict of yours is quite contrarie. For it is rigorous against none, but poore women onely, who are able to yeeld much better content and satisfaction generally, then remaineth in the power of men to do. And moreover, when this Law was made, there was not any woman that gave consent to it, neither were they called to like or allow thereof: in which respect, it may deservedly be termed, an unjust Law. And if you will, in prejudice of my bodie, and of your owne soule, be the executioner of so unlawfull an Edict, it consisteth in your power to do as you please.

But before you proceede to pronounce any sentence, may it please you to favour me with one small request, namely, that you would demand of my Husband, if at all times, and whensoever he tooke delight in my company, I ever made any curiosity, or came to him unwillingly. Whereto Rinaldo, without tarrying for the Potestate to moove the question, sodainly answered; that (undoubtedly) his wife at all times, and oftner then he could request it, was never sparing of her kindnesse, or put him off with any deniall. Then the Lady, continuing on her former speeches, thus replyed. Let me then demand of you my Lord, being our Potestate and Judge, if it be so, by my Husbands owne free confession, that he hath alwaies had his pleasure of me, without the least refusall in me, or contradiction; what should I doe with the over-plus remaining in mine owne power, and whereof he had no need? Would you have mee cast it away to the Dogges? Was it not more fitting for me, to pleasure therwith a worthy Gentleman, who was even at deaths doore for my love, then (my husbands surfetting, and having no neede of me) to let him lye languishing, and dye?

Never was heard such an examination before, and to come from a woman of such worth, the most part of the honourable Pratosians (both Lords and Ladies) being there present, who hearing her urge such a necessary question, cryed out all aloud together with one voice (after they had laughed their fill) that the Lady had saide well, and no more then she might. So that, before they departed thence, by comfortable advice proceeding from the Potestate: the Edict (being reputed overcruell) was modified, and interpreted to concerne them onely, who offered injurie to their Husbands for money. By which meanes, Rinaldo standing as one confounded, for such a foolish and unadvised enterprize, departed from the Auditorie: and the Ladie, not a little joyfull to bee thus freed and delivered from the fire, returned home with victorie to her owne house.

THE EIGHTH NOVELL

IN JUST SCORNE OF SUCH UNSIGHTLY AND ILL-PLEASING SURLY SLUTS, WHO IMAGINE NONE TO BE FAIRE OR WELL-FAVOURED, BUT THEMSELVES.

Fresco *da Celatico, counselled and advised his Neece Cesca: That if such as deserved to be looked on, were offensive to her eyes, as she had often told him; she should forbeare to looke on any.*

All the while as Philostratus was recounting his Novell; it seemed, that the Ladies (who heard it) found themselves much mooved thereat, as by the wanton blood mounting up into their cheekes, it plainly appeared. But in the end, looking on each other with strange behaviour, they could not forbeare smiling: which the Queene interrupting by a command of attention, turning to Madame Æmillia, willed her to follow next. When she, puffing and blowing, as if she had bene newly awaked from sleepe, began in this manner.

Faire Beauties; My thoughts having wandred a great distance hence, and further then I can easily collect them together againe; in obedience yet to our Queene, I shall report a much shorter Novell, then otherwise (perhappes) I should have done, if my minde had beene a little neerer home. I shall tell you the grosse fault of a foolish Damosell, well corrected by a witty reprehension of her Unckle; if shee had bin endued but with so much sence, as to have understood it.

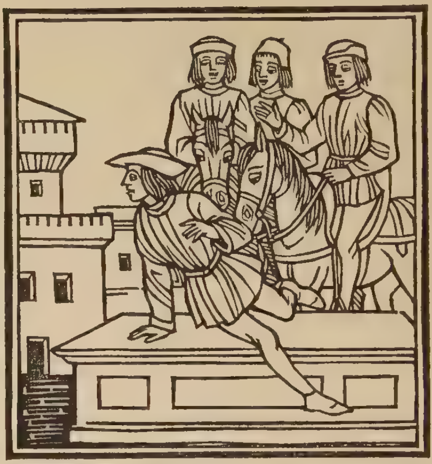
An honest man, named Fresco da Celatico, had a good fulsom wench to his Neece, who for her folly and squemishnes, was generally called Cesta, or nice Francesca. And althogh she had stature sufficient, yet none of the handsomest, and a good hard favourd countenance, nothing nere such Angelical beauties as we have seen; yet she was endued with such height of minde, and so proud an opinion of her selfe, that it appeared as a custome bred in hir, or rather a gift bestowed on hir by nature (thogh none of the best) to blame and despise both men and women, yea whosoever she lookt on; without any consideration of her self, she being as unsightly, ill shaped, and ugly faced, as a worse was very hardly to be found.

Nothing could be done at any time, to yeilde her liking or content: moreover, she was so waspish, nice, and squemish, that when she cam into the royall Court of France, it was hatefull and contemptible to hir. Whensoever she went through the streets, every thing stunke and was noisome to her; so that she never did any thing but stop her nose; as if all men or women she met withall; and whatsoever else she lookt on, were stinking and offensive. But let us leave all further relation of her ill conditions, being every way (indeed) so bad, and hardly becomming any sensible body, that we cannot condemne them so much as we should.

It chanced upon a day, that shee comming home to the house where her Unckle dwelt, declared her wonted scurvy and scornfull behaviour; swelling, puffing, and pouting extreamly, in which humor she sat downe by her Unckle, who desiring to know what had displeased her, said. Why how now Francesca? what may the meaning of this bee? This being a solemne festivall day, what is the reason of your so soone returning home? She coily biting the lip, and brideling her head, as if she had bene some mans best Gelding, sprucely thus replyed.

Indeede you say true Unckle, I am come home verie earely, because, since the day of my birth, I never saw a City so pestered with unhandsome people, both men and women, and worse this high Holyday, then ever I did observe before. I walked thorow some store of streetes, and I could not see one proper man: and as for the women, they are the most mishapen and ugly creatures, that, if God had made me such an one, I should be sory that ever I was borne. And being no longer able to endure such unpleasing sights; you wil not thinke (Unckle) in what an anger I am come home. Fresco, to whome these stinking qualities of his Neece seemed so unsufferable, that hee could not (with patience) endure them any longer, thus short and quickely answered. Francesca, if all people of our Citie (both men and women) be so odious in thy eyes, and offensive to thy nose, as thou hast often reported to me: bee advised then by my counsell. Stay stil at home, and look upon none but thy selfe onely, and then thou shalt be sure that they cannot displease thee. But shee, being as empty of wit as a pith-lesse Cane, and yet thought her judgement to exceed Salomons, could not understand the lest part of hir Unkles meaning, but stood as senselesse as a sheepe. Onely she replyed, that she would resort to some other parts of the country, which if shee found as weakly furnished of handsome people, as heere shee did, shee would conceive better of her selfe, then ever she had done before.

THE NINTH NOVELL



NOTABLY DISCOVERING THE GREAT DIFFERENCE THAT IS BETWEENE LEARNING AND IGNORANCE, UPON JUDICIOUS APPREHENSION.

Signior *Guido Cavalcante, with a sodaine and witty answer, reprehended the rash folly of certaine Florentine Gentlemen, that thought to scorne and flout him.*

When the Queene perceived, that Madame Æmillia was discharged of her Novell, and none remained now to speake next, but onely her selfe, his priviledge alwayes remembred, to whom it belonged to be the last, she began in this manner.

Faire Company, you have this day disappointed me of two Novells at the least, whereof I had intended to make use. Neverthelesse, you shall not imagine mee so unfurnished, but that I have left one in store; the conclusion whereof, may minister such instruction, as will not bee reputed for ydle and impertinent: but rather of such materiall consequence, as better hath not this day past among us.

Understand then (most faire Ladies) that in former times long since past, our Cittie had many excellent and commendable customes in it; whereof (in these unhappy dayes of ours) we cannot say that poore one remaineth, such hath beene the too much encrease of Wealth and Covetousnesse, the onely supplanters of all good qualities whatsoever. Among which lawdable and friendly observations, there was one well deserving note, namely, that in divers places of Florence, men of the best houses in every quarter, had a sociable and neighbourly assemblie together, creating their company to consist of a certaine number, such as were able to supply their expences; as this day one, and to morrow another: and thus in a kinde of friendly course, each daily furnished the Table, for the rest of the company. Oftentimes, they did honour to divers Gentlemen and strangers, upon their arrivall in our Citty, by inviting them into their assembly, and many of our worthiest Citizens beside; so that it grew to a customary use, and one especially day in the yeare appointed, in memory of this so loving a meeting, when they would ride (triumphally as it were) on horsebacke thorow the Cittie, sometimes performing Tilts, Tourneyes, and other Martiall exercises, but they were reserved for Feastivall dayes.

Among which company, there was one called, Signior Betto Bruneleschi, who was earnestly desirous, to procure Signior Guido Cavalcante de Cavalcanti, to make one in this their friendly society. And not without great reason: for, over and beside his being one of the best Logitians as those times could not yeeld a better: He was also a most absolute naturall Philosopher (which worthy qualities were little esteemed among these honest meeters) a very friendly Gentleman, singularly well spoken, and whatsoever else was commendable in any man, was no way wanting in him, being wealthy withall, and able to returne equall honors, where he found them to be duly deserved, as no man therin could go beyond him. But Signior Betto, notwithstanding his long continued importunitie, could not draw him into their assembly, which made him and the rest of his company conceive, that the solitude of Guido, retiring himselfe alwaies from familiar conversing with men: provoked him to many curious speculations: and because he retained some part of the Epicurean Opinion, their vulgare judgement passed on him, that his speculations tended to no other end, but onely to finde out that which was never done.

It chanced upon a day, that Signior Guido departing from the Church of Saint Michaell d'Horta, and passing along by the Adamari, so farre as to Saint Johns Church, which evermore was his customarie Walke: many goodly Marble Tombes were then about the saide Church, as now adayes are at Saint Reparata, and divers more beside. He entring among the Collumbes of Porphiry, and the other Sepulchers being there, because the doore of the Church was shut: Signior Betto and his companie, came riding from S. Reparata, and espying Signior Guido among the graves and tombes, said. Come, let us go make some jests to anger him. So putting the spurs to their horses, they rode apace towards him: and being upon him before he perceived them, one of them said. Guido thou refusest to be one of our society, and seekest for that which never was: when thou hast found it, tell us, what wilt thou do with it?

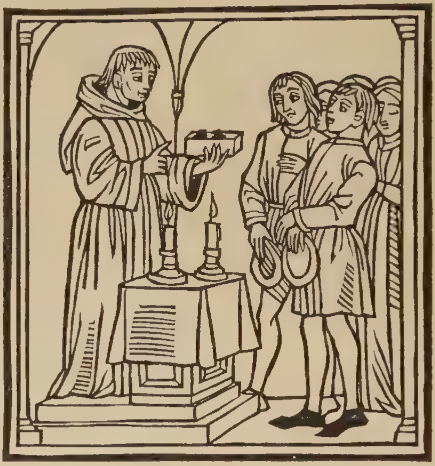
Guido seeing himselfe round engirt with

them, sodainly thus replyed: Gentlemen, you may use mee in your owne house as you please. And setting his hand on one of the Tombes (which was some-what great) he tooke his rising, and leapt quite over it on the further side, as being of an agile and sprightly body, and being thus freed from them, he went away to his owne lodging. They stoode all like men amazed, strangely looking one upon another, and began afterward to murmure among themselves: That Guido was a man without any understanding, and the answer which he had made unto them, was to no purpose, neither favoured of any discretion, but meerely came from an empty brain because they had no more to do in the place where now they were, then any of the other Citizens, and Signior Guido (himselfe) as little as any of them; whereto Signior Betto thus replyed.

Alas Gentlemen, it is you your selves that are void of understanding: for, if you had but observed the answer which he made unto us: hee did honestly, and (in verie few words) not onely notably expresse his owne wisedome, but also deservedly reprehend us. Because, if wee observe things as we ought to doe, Graves and Tombes are the houses of the dead, ordained and prepared to be their latest dwellings. He tolde us moreover, that although we have heere (in this life) other habitations and abidings; yet these (or the like) must at last be our houses. To let us know, and all other foolish, indiscreete, and unlearned men, that we are worse then dead men, in comparison of him, and other men equall to him in skill and learning. And therefore, while wee are heere among these Graves and Monuments, it may well be said, that we are not farre from our owne houses, or how soone we shall be possessors of them, in regard of the frailty attending on us.

Then every one could presently say, that Signior Guido had spoken nothing but the truth, and were much ashamed of their owne folly, and shallow estimation which they had made of Guido, desiring never more after to meddle with him so grossely, and thanking Signior Betto, for so well reforming their ignorance, by his much better apprehension.

THE TENTH NOVELL



WHEREIN MAY BE OBSERVED, WHAT PALPABLE ABUSES DO MANY TIMES PASSE, UNDER THE COUNTERFEIT CLOAKE OF RELIGION.

FRYER *Onyon, promised certaine honest people of the Countrey, to shew them a Feather of the same Phoenix, that was with Noah in his Arke. In sted whereof, he found Coales, which he avouched to be those very coals, wherewith the same Phœnix was roasted.*

WHEN all of them had delivered their Novels, Dioneus knowing, that it remained in him to relate the last for this day: without attending for any solemne command (after he had imposed silence on them, that could not sufficiently commend the witty reprehension of Guido), thus he began. Wise and worthy Ladies, although by the priviledge you have granted, it is lawfull for me to speake any thing best pleasing to my self: yet notwithstanding, it is not any part of my meaning, to varrie from the matter and method, whereof you have spoken to very good purpose. And therefore, following your footsteppes, I entend to tell you, how craftily, and with a Rampiar sodainly raised in his owne defence: a Religious Frier of Saint Anthonies Order, shunned a shame, which two wily companions had prepared for him. Nor let it offend you, if I run into more large discourse, then this day hath bene used by any, for the apter compleating of my Novell: because, if you well observe it, the Sun is as yet in the middest of heaven, and therefore you may the better forbeare me.

Certaldo, as (perhaps) you know, or have heard, is a Village in the Vale of Elsa, and under the authority and commaund of our Florence, which although it be but small: yet (in former times) it hath bin inhabited with Gentlemen, and people of especiall respect. A religious Friar of S. Anthonies Order, named Friar Onyon, had long time used to resort thither, to receive the benevolent almes, which those charitably affected people in simplicity gave him, and chiefly at divers daies of the year, when their bounty and devotion would extend themselves more largely then at other seasons. And so much the rather, because they thought him to be a good Pastor of holy life in outward appearance, and carried a name of much greater matter, then remained in the man indeed; beside, that part of the country yeilded far more plentifull abundance of Onyons, then all other in Tuscany elsewhere, a kinde of foode greatly affected by those Friars, as men alwaies of hungry and good appetite. This Friar Onyon was a man of litle stature, red haire, a chearfull countenance, and the world afforded not a more crafty companion, then he. Moreover, albeit he had very little knowledge or learning, yet he was so prompt, ready and voluble of speech, uttering often he knew not what himselfe: that such as were not wel acquainted with his qualities, supposed him to be a singular Rhetoritian, excelling Cicero or Quintilian themselves; and he was a gossip, friend, or deerely affected, by every one dwelling in those parts. According to his wonted custome, one time he went thither in the month of August, and on a Sunday morning, when all the dwellers thereabout, were present to heare Masse, and in the chiefest Church above all the rest: when the Friar saw time convenient for his purpose, he advanced himselfe, and began to speake in this manner.

Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, you know you have kept a commendable custom, in sending yeerly to the poore brethren of our Lord Baron S. Anthony, both of your Corne and other provision, some more, some lesse, all according to their power, means, and devotion, to the end that blessed S. Anthony should be the more carefull of your oxen, sheep, asses, swine, pigs, and other cattle. Moreover, you have used to pay (especially such as have their names registred in our Fraternity) those duties which annually you send unto us. For the collection whereof, I am sent by my Superior, namely our L. Abbot, and therfore (with Gods blessing) you may come after noone hither, when you shal heare the Bels of the Church ring: then wil I make a predication to you; you shall kisse the Crosse, and beside, because I know you al to be most devout servants to our Lord Baron S. Anthony, in especiall grace and favor, I wil shew you a most holy and goodly Relique, which I my selfe (long since) brought from the holy Land beyond the seas. If you desire to know what it is, let me tell you, that it is one of the Feathers of the same Phœnix, which was in the Arke with the Patriarch Noah. And having thus spoken, he became silent, returning backe to heare Masse. While hee delivered these and the like speeches, among the other people then in the church, there were two shrewde and crafty Companions; the one, named John de Bragoniero, and the other, Biagio Pizzino. These subtile Fellowes, after they had heard the report of Fryer Onyons Relique: althogh they were his intimate friends, and came thither in his company; yet they concluded betweene themselves, to shew him a tricke of Legierdumaine, and to steale the Feather from him. When they had intelligence of Friar Onyons dining that day at the Castle, with a worthy Friend of his: no sooner was he set at the Table, but away went they in all haste, to the Inne where the Fryar frequented, with this determination, that Biagio should hold conference with the Friars boy, while his fellow ransackt the Wallet, to finde the Feather, and carry it away with him, for a future observation, what the Friar would say unto the people, when he found the losse of the Feather, and could not performe his promise to them.

The Fryars Boy, whom some called Guccio Balena, some Guccio Imbrata, and others Guccio Porco, was such a knavish Lad, and had so many bad qualities, as Lippo Topo the cunning Painter, or the most curious Poeticall wit, had not any ability to describe them. Friar Onyon himself did often observe his behaviour, and would make this report among his Friends. My Boy (quoth he) hath nine rare qualities in him, and such they are, as if Salomon, Aristotle, or Seneca had onely but one of them: it were sufficient to torment and trouble all their vertue, all their senses, and all their sanctity. Consider then, what manner of man he is like to be, having nine such rarities, yet voide of all vertue, wit, or goodnes. And when it was demaunded of Friar Onyon, what these nine rare conditions were: hee having them all readie by heart, and in rime, thus answered.

Boyes I have knowne, and seene,
And heard of many:
But,
For Lying, Loytring, Lazinesse,
For Facing, Filching, Filthinesse;
For Carelesse, Gracelesse, all Unthriftinesse,
My Boy excelleth any.

Now, over and beside all these admirable qualities, hee hath manie more such singularities, which (in favour towards him) I am faine to conceale. But that which I smile most at in him, is, that he would have a Wife in every place where he commeth, yea, and a good house to boot too: for, in regard his beard beginneth to shew it selfe, rising thicke in haire, blacke and amiable, he is verily perswaded, that all Women will fall in love with him; and if they refuse to follow him, he will in all hast run after them. But truly, he is a notable servant to mee, for I cannot speake with any one, and in never so great secrecy, but he will be sure to heare his part; and when any question is demanded of me, he standes in such awe and feare of my displeasure: that he will bee sure to make the first answer, yea or no, according as he thinketh it most convenient.

Now, to proceede where we left, Friar Onyon having left this serviceable youth at his lodging, to see that no bodie should meddle with his commodities, especially his Wallet, because of the sacred things therein contained: Guccio Imbrata, who as earnestly affected to be in the Kitchin, as Birds to hop from branch to branch, especially, when anie of the Chamber-maides were there, espyed one of the Hostesses Female attendants, a grosse fat Trugge, low of stature, ill faced, and worse formed, with a paire of brests like two bumbards, smelling loathsomely of grease and sweate; downe shee descended into the Kitchin, like a Kite upon a peece of Carion. This Boy, or Knave, chuse whither you will style him, having carelesly left Fryar Onyons Chamber doore open, and all the holy things so much to be neglected, although it was then the moneth of August, when heate is in the highest predominance, yet hee would needs sit downe by the fire, and began to conferre with this amiable creature, who was called by the name of Nuta.

Being set close by her, he told her, that he was a Gentleman by Atturniship, and that he had more millions of Crownes, then all his life time would serve him to spend; beside those which he payed away dayly, as having no convenient imployment for them. Moreover, he knew how to speake, and do such things, as were beyond wonder or admiration. And, never remembring his olde tatterd Friars Cowle, which was so snottie and greazie, that good store of kitchin stuffe might have beene boiled out of it; as also a foule slovenly Trusse or halfe doublet, all baudied with bowsing, fat greazie lubberly sweating, and other drudgeries in the Convent Kitchin, where he was an Officer in the meanest credite. So that to describe this sweet youth in his lively colours, both for naturall perfections of body, and artificiall composure of his Garments; never came the fowlest silks out of Tartaria or India, more ugly or unsightly to bee lookt upon. And for a further addition to his neate knavery, his breeches were so rent betweene his legges, his shooes and stockings had bin at such a mercilesse massacre: that the gallantest Commandador of Castile (though he had never so lately bin releast out of slavery) could have wisht for better garments, then he; or make larger promises, then he did to his Nuta. Protesting to entitle her as his onely, to free her from the Inne and Chamber thraldomes, if she would live with him, be his Love, partaker of his present possessions, and so to succeed in his future Fortunes. All which bravadoes, though they were belcht foorth with admirable insinuations: yet they converted into smoke, as all such braggadochio behaviours do, and he was as wise at the ending, as when he began.

Our former named two craftie Companions, seeing Guccio Porco so seriously employed about Nuta, was there-with not a little contented, because their intended labour was now more then halfe ended. And perceiving no contradiction to crosse their proceeding, into Friar Onyons chamber entred they, finding it ready open for their purpose: where the first thing that came into their hand in search, was the wallet. When they had opened it, they found a small Cabinet, wrapped in a great many foldings of rich Taffata; and having unfolded it, a fine formall Key was hanging thereat: wherwith having unlockt the Cabinet, they found a faire Feather of a Parrots taile, which they supposed to bee the verie same, that he meant to shew the people of Certaldo. And truly (in those dayes) it was no hard matter to make them beleeve any thing, because the idle vanities of Ægypt and those remoter parts, had not (as yet) bin seene in Tuscany, as since then they have bin in great abundance, to the utter ruine (almost) of Italy.

And although they might then be knowne to very few, yet the inhabitants of the Country generally, understoode little or nothing at all of them. For there, the pure simplicitie of their ancient predecessors still continuing; they had not seene any Parrots, or so much as heard any speech of them. Wherefore the two crafty consorts, not a little joyfull of finding the Feather, tooke it thence with them, and beecause they would not leave the Cabinet empty, espying Charcoales lying in a corner of the Chamber, they filled it with them, wrapping it up againe in the Taffata, and in as demure manner as they found it. So, away came they with the Feather, neither seene or suspected by any one, intending now to heare what Friar Onyon would say, uppon the losse of his precious Relique, and finding the Coales there placed insted thereof.

The simple men and women of the country, who had bin at morning Masse in the Church, and heard what a wonderful Feather they should see in the after noone, returned in all hast to their houses, where one telling this newes to another, and gossip with gossip consulting theron; they made the shorter dinner, and afterward flocked in maine troopes to the Castle, contending who shold first get entrance, such was their devotion to see the holy feather. Friar Onyon having dined, and reposed a litle after his wine, he arose from the table to the window, where beholding what multitudes came to see the feather, he assured himselfe of good store of mony. Hereupon, he sent to his Boy Guccio Imbrata, that uppon the Bels ringing, he should come and bring the wallet to him. Which (with much ado) he did, so soone as his quarrell was ended in the kitchin, with the amiable Chamber-maid Nuta, away then he went with his holy commodities: where he was no sooner arrived, but because his belly was readie to burst with drinking water, he sent him to the Church to ring the bels, which not onely would warme the cold water in his belly, but likewise make him run as gaunt as a Grey-hound.

When all the people were assembled in the Church together, Friar Onyon (never distrusting any injurie offered him, or that his close commodities had bin medled withal) began his predication, uttering a thousand lies to fit his purpose. And when he came to shew the feather of the Phœnix (having first in great devotion finisht the confession) he caused two goodly torches to be lighted, and ducking downe his head three severall times, before hee would so much as touch the Taffata, he opened it with much reverence. So soone as the Cabinet came to be seen, off went his Hood, lowly he bowed downe his body, and uttering especial praises of the Phœnix, and sacred properties of the wonderfull Relique, the Cover of the Cabinet being lifted uppe, he saw the same to bee full of Coales. He could not suspect his Villaine boy to do this deede, for he knew him not to be endued with so much wit, onely hee curst him for keeping it no better, and curst himselfe also, for reposing trust in such a careles knave, knowing him to be slothfull, disobedient, negligent, and void of all honest understanding or grace. Sodainly (without blushing) lest his losse should be discerned, he lifted his lookes and hands to heaven, speaking out so loude, as every one might easily heare him, thus: O thou omnipotent providence, for ever let thy power be praised. Then making fast the Cabinet againe, and turning himselfe to the people, with lookes expressing admiration, he proceeded in this manner.

Lords, Ladies, and you the rest of my worthy Auditors: You are to understand, that I (being then very young) was sent by my Superiour, into those parts, where the Sun appeareth at his first rising. And I had received charge by expresse command, that I should seeke for (so much as consisted in my power to do) the especiall vertues and priviledges belonging to Porcellane, which although the boyling thereof bee worth but little, yet it is very profitable to any but us. In regard whereof, being upon my journey, and departing from Venice, passing along the Borgo de Grecia, I proceeded thence (on horseback) through the Realme of Garbo, so to Baldacca, till I came to Parione; from whence, not without great extremity of thirst, I arrived in Sardignia.

But why do I trouble you with the repetition of so many countries? I coasted on still, after I had past Saint Georges Arme, into Truffia, and then into Buffia which are Countries much inhabited, and with great people. From thence I went into the Land of Lying, where I found store of the Brethren of our Religion, and many other beside, who shunned all paine and labour, onely for the love of God, and cared as little, for the paines and travailes which others tooke, except some benefit arised thereby to them; nor spend they any money in this Country, but such as is without stampe. Thence I went into the Land of Abruzzi, where the men and women goe in Galoches over the Mountaines, and make them garments of their Swines guts. Not farre from thence, I found people, that carried bread in their staves, and wine in Satchels, when parting from them, I arrived among the Mountaines of Bacchus, where all the waters run downe with a deepe fall, and in short time, I went on so far, that I found my selfe to be in India Pastinaca; where I swear to you by the holy habit which I weare on my body, that I saw Serpents flye, things incredible, and such as were never seene before.

But because I would be loth to lye, so soone as I departed thence, I met with Maso de Saggio, who was a great Merchant there, and whom I found cracking Nuts, and selling Cockles by retale. Neverthelesse, al this while I could not finde what I sought for, and therefore I was to passe from hence by water, if I intended to travaile thither, and so in returning back, I came into the Holy Land, where coole fresh bread is sold for foure pence, and the hot is given away for nothing. There I found the venerable Father (blame me not I beseech you) the most woorthie Patriarch of Jerusalem, who for the reverence due to the habite I weare, and love to our Lord Baron Saint Anthony, would have me to see al the holy Reliques, which he had there under his charge: wherof there were so many, as if I should recount them all to you, I never could come to a conclusion. But yet, not to leave you discomforted, I will relate some few of them to you.

First of all, he shewed me the finger of the holy Ghost, so whole and perfect, as ever it was. Next, the nose of the Cherubin, which appeared to Saint Frances; with the payring of the naile of a Seraphin; and one of the ribbes of Verbum caro, fastened to one of the Windowes, covered with the holy garments of the Catholique Faith. Then he tooke me into a darke Chappel, where he shewed me divers beames of the Starre that appeared to the three Kings in the East. Also a Violl of Saint Michaels sweate, when he combatted with the divell: And the jaw-bone of dead Lazarus, with many other precious things beside. And because I was liberall to him, giving him two of the Plaines of Monte Morello, in the Vulgare Edition, and some of the Chapters del Caprezio, which he had long laboured in search of; he bestowed on me some of his Reliques.

First, he gave me one of the eye-teeth of Santa Crux; and a litle Violl, filled with some part of the sound of those Belles, which hung in the sumptuous Temple of Salomon. Next, he gave mee the Feather of the Phœnix, which was with Noah in the Arke, as before I told you. And one of the Woodden Pattens, which the good Saint Gerrard de Magnavilla used to weare in his travailes, and which I gave (not long since) to Gerrardo di Bousy at Florence, where it is respected with much devotion. Moreover, he gave me a few of those Coales, wherwith the Phœnix of Noah was roasted; all which things I brought away thence with me. Now, most true it is, that my Superiour would never suffer mee to shew them any where, untill he was faithfully certified, whether they were the same precious Reliques, or no. But perceyving by sundrie Myracles which they have wrought, and Letters of sufficient credence receyved from the reverend Patriarch, that all is true, he hath graunted me permission to shew them, and because I wold not trust any one with matters of such moment, I my selfe brought them hither with me.

Now I must tell you, that the Feather of the same Phœnix, I conveyed into a small Cabinet or Casket, because it should not be bent or broken. And the Coales wherewith the said Phœnix was roasted, I put into another Casket, in all respects so like to the former, that many times I have taken one for another. As now at this instant it hath bin my fortune: for, imagining that I brought the Casket with the feather, I mistooke my self, and brought the other with the coales. Wherein doubtles I have not offended, because I am certaine, that we of our Order do not any thing, but it is ordred by divine direction, and our blessed Patron the Lorde Baron Saint Anthony. And so much the rather, because about a senight hence, the Feast of Saint Anthony is to bee solemnized, against the preparation whereof, and to kindle your zeale with the greater fervencie: he put the Casket with the Coales into my hand, meaning, to let you see the Feather, at some more fitting season. And therefore my blessed Sonnes and Daughters, put off your Bonnets, and come hither with devotion to looke upon them. But first let me tell you, whosoever is marked by any of these Coales, with the signe of the Crosse: he or she shal live all this yeare happily, and no fire whatsoever shall come neere to touch or hurt them. So, singing a solemne Antheme in the praise of S. Anthony, he unveyled the Casket, and shewed the Coales openly.

The simple multitude, having (with great admiration and reverence) a long while beheld them, they thronged in crouds to Fryar Onyon, giving him farre greater offerings, then before they had, and entreating him to marke them each after other. Whereupon, he taking the coales in his hand, began to marke their garments of white, and the veyles on the Womens heads, with Crosses of no meane extendure: affirming to them, that the more the Coales wasted with making those great crosses, the more they still encreased in the Casket, as often before hee had made triall.

In this manner, having crossed all the Certaldanes (to his great benefit) and their abuse: he smiled at his sodaine and dexterious devise, in mockery of them, who thought to have made a scorne of him, by dispossessing him of the Feather. For Bragoniero and Pizzino, being present at his Learned predication, and having heard what a cunning shift he found, to come off cleanly, without the least detection, and all delivered with such admirable protestations: they were faine to forsake the Church, least they should have burst with laughing.

But when all the people were parted and gone, they met Friar Onyon at his Inne, where closely they discovered to him, what they had done, delivering him his Feather againe: which the yeare following, did yeeld him as much money, as now the Coales had done.

This Novell affoorded equall pleasing to the whole companie, Friar Onyons Sermon being much commended, but especially his long Pilgrimage, and the Reliques he had both seene, and brought home with him. Afterward, the Queene perceiving, that her reigne had now the full expiration, graciously she arose, and taking the Crowne from off her owne head, placed [it] on the head of Dioneus, saying. It is high time Dioneus, that you should taste part of the charge and paine, which poore women have felt and undergone in their soveraigntie and government: wherefore, be you our King, and rule us with such awefull authority, that the ending of your dominion may yeelde us all contentment. Dioneus being thus invested with the Crowne, returned this answer.

I make no doubt (bright Beauties) but you many times have seene as good, or a better King among the Chessemen, then I am. But yet of a certainty, if you would be obedient to me, as you ought in dutie unto a true King: I should grant you a liberall freedome of that, wherein you take the most delight, and without which, our choisest desires can never be compleate. Neverthelesse, I meane, that my government shal be according to mine owne minde. So, causing the Master of the Houshold to be called for, as all the rest were wont to do for conference with him: he gave him direction, for al things fitting the time of his Regiment, and then turning to the Ladies, thus he proceeded.

Honest Ladies, we have alreadie discoursed of variable devises, and so many severall manners of humane industry, concerning the busines wherewith Lacisca came to acquaint us: that her very words, have ministred me matter, sufficient for our morrowes conference, or else I stand in doubt, that I could not have devised a more convenient Theame for us to talke on. She (as you have all heard) saide, that shee had not anie neighbour, who came a true Virgin to her Husband, and added moreover, that she knew some others, who had beguiled their Husbandes, in very cunning and crafty manner. But setting aside the first part, concerning the proofe of children, I conceive the second to bee more apte for our intended argument. In which respect, my will is (seeing Lacisca hath given us so good an occasion) that our discoursing to morow, máy onely concerne such slye cunning and deceits, as women have heeretofore used, for satisfying their owne appetites, and beguiling their Husbands, without their knowledge, or suspition, and cleanly escaping with them, or no.

This argument seemed not very pleasing to the Ladies, and therefore they urged an alteration thereof, to some matter better suting with the day, and their discoursing: whereto thus he answered. Ladies, I know as well as your selves, why you would have this instant argument altered: but, to change me from it you have no power, considering the season is such, as shielding all (both men and women) from medling with any dishonest action; it is lawfull for us to speake of what wee please. And know you not, that through the sad occasion of the time, which now overruleth us, the Judges have forsaken their venerable benches, the Lawes (both divine and humane) ceasing, granting ample license to every one, to do what best agreeth with the conservation of life? Therefore, if your honesties doe straine themselves a little, both in thinking and speaking, not for prosecution of any immodest deede, but onely for familiar and blamelesse entercourse: I cannot devise a more convenient ground, at least that carrieth apparant reason, for reproofe of perils, to ensue by any of you. Moreover, your company, which hath bin most honest, since the first day of our meeting, to this instant: appeareth not any jot to be disgraced, by any thing either said or done, neither shal be (I hope) in the meanest degree.

And what is he, knowing your choise and vertuous dispositions, so powerfull in their owne prevailing, that wanton words cannot misguide your wayes, no nor the terror of death it selfe, that dare insinuate a distempred thought? But admit, that some slight or shallow judgements, hearing you (perhaps sometimes) talke of such amorous follies, should therefore suspitiously imagine you to be faulty, or else you would bee more sparing of speech? Their wit and censure are both alike, savouring rather of their owne vile nature, who would brand others with their basebred imperfections. Yet ther is another consideration beside, of som great injury offered to mine honor, and whereof I know not how you can acquit your selves.

I that have bin obedient to you all, and borne the heavy load of your businesse, having now (with full consent) created mee your King, you would wrest the law out of my hands, and dispose of my authoritie as you please. Forbeare (gentle Ladies) all frivolous suspitions, more fit for them that are full of bad thoughts, then you, who have true Vertue shining in your eyes; and therefore, let every one freely speake their minde, according as their humors best pleaseth them.

When the Ladies heard this, they made answer, that all should bee answerable to his minde. Whereupon, the King gave them all leave to dispose of themselves till supper time. And because the Sun was yet very high, in regard all the re-counted Novels had bin so short: Dioneus went to play at the Tables with another of the yong Gentlemen, and Madame Eliza, having withdrawne the Ladies aside, thus spake unto them. During the time of our being heere, I have often bene desirous to let you see a place somwhat neere at hand, and which I suppose you have never seene, it being called The Valley of Ladies. Till now, I could not finde any convenient time to bring you thither, the Sunne continuing still aloft, which fitteth you with the apter leysure, and the sight (I am sure) can no way discontent you.

The Ladies replyed, that they were all ready to walk with her thither: and calling one of their women to attend on them, they set on, without speaking a word to any of the men. And within the distance of halfe a mile, they arrived at the Valley of Ladies, wherinto they entred by a strait passage at the one side, from whence there issued forth a cleare running River. And they found the saide Valley to bee so goodly and pleasant, especially in that season, which was the hottest of all the yeare; as all the world was no where able to yeeld the like. And, as one of the said Ladies (since then) related to mee, there was a plaine in the Valley so directly round, as if it had beene formed by a compasse, yet rather it resembled the Workmanship of Nature, then to be made by the hand of man: containing in circuite somewhat more then the quarter of a mile, environed with sixe small hils, of no great height, and on each of them stood a little Palace, shaped in the fashion of Castles.

The ground-plot descending from those hils or mountaines, grew lesse and lesse by variable degrees, as wee observe at entering into our Theaters, from the highest part to the lowest, succinctly to narrow the circle by order. Now, concerning these ground-plottes or little Meadowes, those which the Sun Southward looked on, were full of Vines, Olive-trees, Almond-trees, Cherry-trees, and Figge-trees, with divers other Trees beside, so plentifully bearing fruites, as you could not discerne a hands bredth of losse. The other Mountaines, whereon the Northerne windes blow, were curiously covered with small Thickets or Woods of Oakes, Ashes, and other Trees so greene and straite, as it was impossible to behold fairer. The goodly plaine it selfe, not having any other entrance, but where the Ladies came in, was planted with Trees of Firre, Cipresse, Laurell, and Pines; so singularly growing in formall order, as if some artificiall or cunning hand had planted them, the Sun hardly piercing through their branches, from the top to the bottome, even at his highest, or any part of his course.

All the whole field was richly spred with grasse, and such variety of delicate Flowers, as Nature yeilded out of her plenteous Store-house. But that which gave no lesse delight then any of the rest, was a smal running Brooke, descending from one of the Vallies, that divided two of the little hils, and fell through a Veine of the intire Rocke it selfe, that the fall and murmure thereof was most delightfull to heare, seeming all the way in the descent, like Quicke-silver, weaving it selfe into artificiall workes, and arriving in the plaine beneath, it was there receyved into a small Channell, swiftly running through the midst of the plaine, to a place where it stayed, and shaped it selfe into a Lake or Pond, such as our Citizens have in their Orchards or Gardens, when they please to make use of such a commodity.

This Pond was no deeper, then to reach the breast of a man, and having no mud or soyle in it, the bottome thereof shewed like small beaten gravell, with prety pibble stones intermixed, which some that had nothing else to do, would sit downe and count them as they lay, as very easily they might. And not onely was the bottome thus apparantly seene, but also such plenty of Fishes swimming every way, as the mind was never to be wearied in looking on them. Nor was this water bounded in with any bankes, but onely the sides of the plain Medow, which made it appeare the more sightly, as it arose in swelling plenty. And alwayes as it superabounded in his course, least it should overflow disorderly: it fell into another Channell, which conveying it along the lower Valley, ran forth to water other needfull places.

When the Ladies were arrived in this goodly valley, and upon advised viewing it, had sufficiently commended it: in regard the heat of the day was great, the place tempting, and the Pond free from sight of any, they resolved there to bathe themselves. Wherefore they sent the waiting Gentlewoman to have a diligent eye on the way where they entered, least any one should chance to steale upon them. All seven of them being stript naked, into the water they went, which hid their delicate white bodies, like as a cleare Glasse concealeth a Damask Rose within it. So they being in the Pond, and the water nothing troubled by their being there, they found much prety pastime together, running after the Fishes, to catch them with their hands, but they were over-quicke and cunning for them. After they had delighted themselves there to their owne contentment, and were cloathed with their garments, as before: thinking it fit time for their returning backe againe, least their over-long stay might give offence, they departed thence in an easie pace, dooing nothing else all the way as they went, but extolling the Valley of Ladies beyond all comparison.

At the Palace they arrived in a due houre, finding the three Gentlemen at play, as they left them, to whom Madame Pampinea pleasantly thus spake. Now trust me Gallants, this day wee have very cunningly beguiled you. How now? answered Dioneus, begin you first to act, before you speake? Yes truly Sir, replyed Madame Pampinea: Relating to him at large, from whence they came, what they had done there, the beautie of the place, and the distance thence. The King (upon hir excellent report) being very desirous to see it; sodainely commaunded Supper to be served in, which was no sooner ended, but they and their three servants (leaving the Ladies) walked on to the Valley, which when they had considered, no one of them having ever bin there before; they thought it to be the Paradise of the World.

They bathed themselves there likewise, as the Ladies formerlie had done, and being re-vested, returned backe to their Lodgings, because darke night drew on apace: but they found the Ladies dauncing, to a Song which Madame Fiammetta sung. When the dance was ended, they entertained the time with no other discourse, but onely concerning the Valley of Ladies, whereof they all spake liberally in commendations. Whereupon, the King called the Master of the Houshold, giving him command, that (on the morrow) dinner should be readie betimes, and bedding to be thence carried, if any desired rest at mid-time of the day.

All this being done, variety of pleasing Wines were brought, Banquetting stuffe, and other dainties; after which they fell to Dauncing. And Pamphilus, having receyved command to begin an especial dance, the King turned himselfe unto Madame Eliza, speaking thus. Faire Lady, you have done me so much honour this day, as to deliver mee the Crowne: in regard whereof, be you this night the Mistresse of the song: and let it be such as best may please your selfe. Whereunto Madam Eliza, with a modest blush arising in her face, replyed; That his will should be fulfilled, and then (with a delicate voyce) she beganne in this manner.

THE SONG

The Chorus sung by all.

Love, if I can scape free from forth thy holde,
  Beleeve it for a truth,
Never more shall thy falshoode me enfolde.

When I was yong, I entred first thy fights,
Supposing there to finde a solemne peace:
I threw off all my Armes, and with delights
Fed my poore hopes, as still they did encrease.
But like a Tyrant, full of rancorous hate,
Thou tookst advantage:
And I sought refuge, but it was too late.
Love, if I can scape free, etc.

But being thus surprized in thy snares,
To my misfortune, thou madst me her slave;
Was onely borne to feede me with despaires,
And keepe me dying in a living grave.
For I saw nothing dayly fore mine eyes,
But rackes and tortures:
From which I could not get in any wise.
Love, if I can scape free, etc.

My sighes and teares I vented to the winde,
For none would heare or pittie my complaints;
My torments still encreased in this kinde,
And more and more I felt these sharpe restraints.
Release me now at last from forth this hell.
Aswage thy rigour,
Delight not thus in cruelty to dwell.
Love, if I can scape free, etc.

If this thou wilt not grant, be yet so kinde,
Release me from those worse then servile bands,
Which new vaine hopes have bred, wherein I finde;
Such violent feares, as comfort quite withstands.
Be now (at length) a little moov'd to pittie,
Be it nere so little:
Or in my death listen my Swan-like Dittie.

Love, if I can scape free from forth thy holde,
Beleeve it for a truth,
Never more shall thy falshood me enfolde.

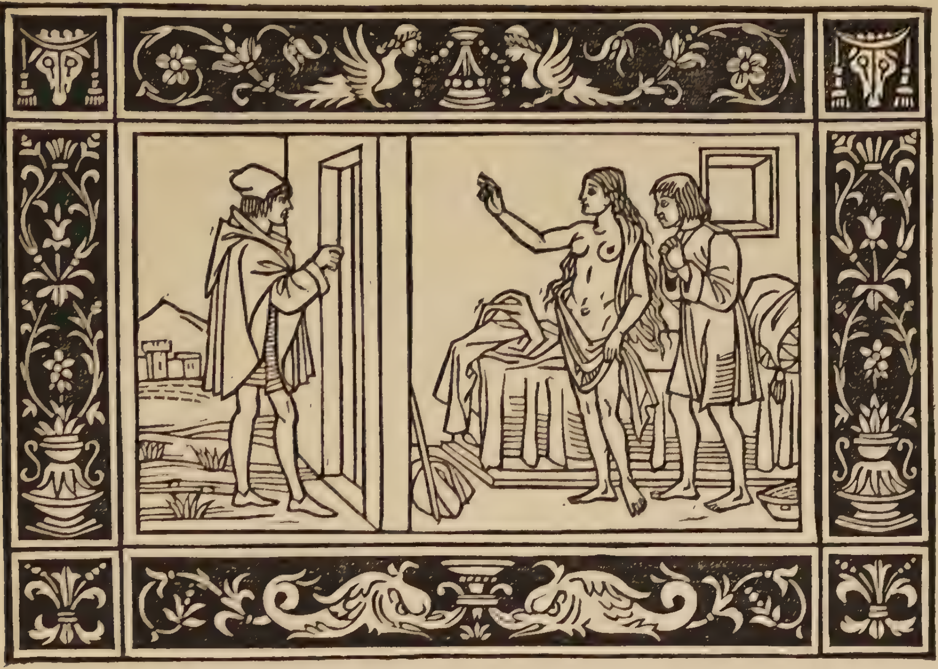
After that Madame Eliza had made an end of her Song, which shee sealed up with an heart-breaking sigh: they all sate amazedly wondering at her moanes, not one among them being able to conjecture, what should be the reason of her singing in this manner. But the King being in a good and pleasing temper, calling Tindaro, commaunded him to bring his Bagge-pipe, by the sound whereof they danced divers daunces: And a great part of the night being spent in this manner, they all gave over, and departed to their Chambers.

THE INDUCTION TO THE SEVENTH DAY

WHEN THE ASSEMBLY BEING MET TOGETHER, AND UNDER THE REGIMENT OF DIONEUS: THE DISCOURSES ARE DIRECTED, FOR THE DISCOVERIE OF SUCH POLICIES AND DECEITES, AS WOMEN HAVE USED FOR BEGUILING OF THEIR HUSBANDES, EITHER IN RESPECT OF THEIR LOVE, OR FOR THE PREVENTION OF SOME BLAME OR SCANDALL, ESCAPING WITHOUT SIGHT, KNOWLEDGE, OR OTHERWISE.

ALL the Starres were departed out of the East, but onely that, which we commonly cal bright Lucifer, or the Day-Star, gracing the morning very gloriously: when the Master of the household, being risen, went with all the provision, to the Valley of Ladies, to make everie thing in due and decent readines, according as his Lord over-night had commanded him. After which departure of his, it was not long before the King arose, beeing awaked with the noise which the carriages made; and when he was up, the other two Gentlemen and the Ladies were quickly readie soone after.

Such as were so disposed, were licensed by the King to take their rest: and they that would not, he permitted them to their wonted pastimes, each according to their minds. But when they were risen from sleepe, and the rest from their other exercises, it seemed to be more then high time, that they should prepare for talke and conference. So, sitting downe on Turky Carpets, which were spred abroad on the green grasse, and close by the place where they had dined: the King gave command, that Madam Æmillia should first begin, whereto she willingly yeelding obedience, and expecting such silent attention, as formerly had bin, thus she began.



REPREHENDING THE SIMPLICITY OF SOME SOTTISH HUSBANDS: AND DISCOVERING THE WANTON SUBTILTIES OF SOME WOMEN, TO COMPASSE THEIR UNLAWFULL DESIRES.

John of Lorraine heard one knocke at his doore in the night time, whereuppon he awaked his Wife Monna Tessa. She made him beleeve, that it was a Spirit which knocked at the doore, and so they arose, going both together to conjure the Spirit with a prayer; and afterwardes, they heard no more knocking.

My Gracious Lord (quoth Madame Æmillia) it had bene a matter highly pleasing to mee, that any other (rather then my selfe) should have begun to speake of this argument, which it hath pleased you to apoint. But seeing it is your Highnesse pleasure, that I must make a passage of assurance for all the rest; I will not be irregular, because obedience is our cheefe Article. I shall therefore (Gracious Ladies) strive, to speake something, which may bee advantageable to you heereafter, in regard, that if other women bee as fearfull as we, especially of Spirits, of which all our sexe have generally bin timorous (although, upon my credite, I know not what they are, nor ever could meete with any, to tell me what they be) you may, by the diligent observation of my Novell: learne a wholsome and holy prayer, very availeable, and of precious power, to conjure and drive them away, whensoever they shall presume to assault you in any place.

There dwelt sometime in Florence, and in the street of Saint Brancazio, a woollen Weaver, named John of Lorrayne; a man more happy in his Art, then wise in any thing else beside: because, savouring somewhat of the Gregorie, and (in very deede) little lesse then an Ideot; Hee was many times made Captain of the Woollen-Weavers, in the quarters belonging to Santa Maria Novella, and his house was the Schoole or receptacle, for all their meetings and assemblies. He had divers other petty Offices beside, by the dignity and authority whereof, hee supposed himselfe much exalted or elevated, above the common pitch of other men. And this humour became the more tractable to him, because he addicted himselfe oftentimes (as being a man of an easie inclination) to be a benefactor to the holy Fathers of Santa Maria Novella, giving (beside his other charitable Almes) to some one a paire of Breeches, to another a Hood, and to another a whole habit. In reward whereof, they taught him (by heart) many wholsome prayers, as the Pater noster in the vulgar tongue; the Song of Saint Alexis; the Lamentations of Saint Bernard, the Hymne of Madame Matilda, and many other such like matters, which he kept charily, and repeated usually, as tending to the salvation of his soule.

This man, had a very faire and lovely wife, named Monna Tessa, the daughter of Manuccio della Cuculia, wise and well advised; who knowing the simplicity of her Husband, and affecting Frederigo di Neri Pegolotti, who was a comely yong Gentleman, fresh, and in the floure of his time, even as she was, therefore they agreed the better together. By meanes of her Chambermaid, Frederigo and shee met often together, at a Countrie Farme of John of Lorraynes, which hee had neere to Florence, and where she used to lodge all the Summer time, called Camerata, whether John resorted somtimes to Supper, and lodge for a night, returning home againe to his City house the next morning; yet often he would stay there longer with his owne companions.

Frederigo, who was no meane man in his Mistresses favor, and therefore these private meetings the more welcome to him; received a summons or assignation from her, to be there on such a night, when hir husband had no intent of comming thither. There they supped merrily together, and (no doubt) did other things, nothing appertaining to our purpose, she both acquainting, and well instructing him, in a dozen (at the least) of her Husbands devout prayers. Nor did shee make any account, or Frederigo either, that this should be the last time of their meeting, because (indeede) it was not the first: and therfore they set downe an order and conclusion together (because the Chambermaide must be no longer the messenger) in such manner as you shall heare.

Frederigo was to observe especially, that alwayes when hee went or came from his owne house, which stood much higher then John of Lorraynes did, to looke upon a Vine, closely adjoyning to her house, where stood the scull of an Asses head, advanced upon an high pole; and when the face thereof looked towards Florence, he might safely come, it being an assured signe, that John kept at home. And if he found the doore fast shut, he should softly knocke three severall times, and thereon bee admitted entrance. But if the face stood towards Fiesola; then he might not come, for it was the signe of Johns being there, and then there might be no medling at all.

Having thus agreed upon this conclusion, and had many merry meetings together: one night above the rest, when Frederigo was appointed to suppe with Monna Tessa, who had made ready two fat Capons, drest in most dainty and delicate manner: it fell out so unfortunately, that John (whose Kue was not to come that night) came thither very late, yet before Frederigo, wherewith she being not a little offended, gave John a slight supper, of Lard, Bacon, and such like coarse provision, because the other was kept for a better guest. In the meane time, and while John was at supper, the Maide (by her Mistresses direction) had conveighed the two Capons, with boyled

Eggs, Bread and a Bottle of Wine (all folded up in a faire cleane table cloth) into her Garden, that had a passage to it, without entering into the house, and where shee had divers times supt with Frederigo. She further willed the Maide, to set all those things under a Peach tree, which adjoyned to the fields side: but, so angry she was at her husbands unexpected comming, that shee forgot to bid her tarrie there, till Frederigoes comming, and to tell him of Johns being there: as also, to take what he found prepared readie for his Supper.

John and she being gone to bed together, and the Maide likewise, it was not long after, before Frederigo came, and knocking once softly at the doore, which was very neere to their lodging Chamber, John heard the noise, and so did his wife. But to the end, that John might not have the least scruple of suspition, she seemed to be fast asleepe; and Frederigo pausing a while, according to the order directed, knockt againe the second time. John wondering thereat very much, jogd his wife a litle, and saide to her: Tessa, hearest thou nothing? Methinkes one knocketh at our doore. Monna Tessa, who was better acquainted with the knocke, then plaine honest meaning John was, dissembling as if shee awaked out of a drowsie dreame, saide: Alas Husband, dost thou know what this is? In the name of our blessed Ladie, be not affraid, this is but the Spirit which haunts our Countrey houses, whereof I have often told thee, and it hath many times much dismayed me, living heere alone without thy comfort. Nay, such hath bin my feare, that in divers nights past, so soone as I heard the knockes: I was feigne to hide my selfe in the bedde over-head and eares (as we usually say) never daring to be so bold, as to looke out, untill it was broad open day. Arise good wife (quoth John) and if it be such a Spirit of the Countrey, as thou talkest of, never be affraid; for before we went to bed, I said the Telucis, the Intemerata, with many other good prayers beside. Moreover, I made the signe of the Crosse at every corner of our bed, in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, so that no doubt at all needs to be made, of any power it can have to hurt or touch us.

Monna Tessa, because (perhaps) Frederigo might receive some other suspition, and so enter into distaste of her by anger or offence: determined to arise indeede, and to let him covertly understand, that John was there, and therefore saide to her husband. Beleeve me John, thy counsell is good, and every one of thy words hath wisedome in it: but I hold it best for our owne safety, thou being heere; that wee should conjure him quite away, to the end he may never more haunt our house. Conjure him Wife? Quoth John, By what meanes? and how? Bee patient good man (quoth Tessa) and I will enstruct thee. I have learned an excellent kinde of conjuration; for, the last weeke, when I went to procure the pardons at Fiesola, one of the holy recluse Nuns, who (indeede John) is my indeered Sister and Friend, and the most sanctimonius in life of them all; perceiving me to be troubled and terrified by Spirits; taught me a wholsome and holy prayer, and protested withall, that shee had often made experiment thereof, before she became a Recluse, and found it (alwayes) a present helpe to her. Yet never durst I adventure to essay it, living heere by my selfe all alone: but honest John, seeing thou art heere with me, we will go both together, and conjure this Spirit. John replyed, that he was very willing; and being both up, they went fayre and softly to the doore, where Frederigo stoode still without, and was growne somewhat suspitious of his long attendance.

When they were come to the doore, Monna Tessa said to John: Thou must cough and spet, at such time as I shall bid thee. Well (quoth John) I will not faile you. Immediately she beganne her prayer in this manner.

Spirit, that walkst thus in the night,
Poore Countrey people to affright:
Thou hast mistane thy marke and ayme,
The head stood right, but John home came,
And therefore thou must packe away,
For I have nothing else to say:
But to my Garden get the gone,
Under the Peach-tree stands alone,
There shalt thou finde two Capons drest,
And Egges laide in mine owne Hennes nest,
Bread, and a Bottle of good Wine,
All wrapt up in a cloath most fine.
Is not this good Goblins fare?
Packe and say you have your share;
Not doing harme to John or me,
Who this night keepes me companie.

No sooner had she ended her devoute conjuring prayer, but she saide to her husband: Now John, cough and spet: which John accordingly did. And Frederigo, being all this while without, hearing her witty conjuration of a Spirit, which he himselfe was supposed to be, being ridde of his former jealous suspition: in the middst of all his melancholy, could very hardly refraine from laughing, the jest appeared so pleasing to him: But when John cought and spet, softly he said to himselfe: When next thou spetst, spet out all thy teeth.

The woman having three severall times conjured the Spirite, in such manner as you have already heard; returned to bed againe with her husband: and Frederigo, who came as perswaded to sup with her, being supperlesse all this while; directed by the words of Monna Tessa in hir praier, went into the Garden. At the foot of the Peach-tree, there he found the linnen cloth, with the two hot Capons, Bread, Egges, and a Bottle of Wine in it, all which he carried away with him, and went to Supper at better leysure. Oftentimes afterward, upon other meetings of Frederigo and she together, they laughed heartily at her enchantment, and the honest beleefe of silly John.

I cannot deny, but that some do affirme, that the Woman had turned the face of the Asses head towards Fiesola, and a Country Travailer passing by the Vine, having a long piked staffe on his necke: the staffe (by chance) touched the head, and made it turne divers times about, and in the end faced Florence, which being the cal for Frederigoes comming, by this meanes he was disappointed. In like manner some say, that Monna Tessaes prayer for conjuring the Spirit, was in this order.

Spirit, Spirit, go thy way,
And come againe some other day.
It was not I that turnd the head,
But some other. In our Bed
Are John and I: Go from our dore,
And see thou trouble us no more.

So that Frederigo departed thence, both with the losse of his labour and supper. But a neighbour of mine, who is a woman of good yeares, told me, that both the one and other were true, as she her selfe heard, when she was a little Girle. And concerning the latter accident, it was not to John of Lorrayne, but to another, named John de Nello, that dwelt at S. Peters Gate, and of the same profession as John of Lorrayne was. Wherefore (faire Ladies) it remaineth in your owne choice, to entertain which of the two prayers you please, or both together if you will: for they are of extraordinary vertue in such strange occurrences, as you have heeretofore heard, and (upon doubt) may prove by experience. It shall not therefore be amisse for you, to learne them both by hart, for (peradventure) they may stand you in good sted, if ever you chance to have the like occasion.

THE SECOND NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, WHAT HARD AND NARROW SHIFTS AND DISTRESSES, SUCH AS BEE SERIOUSLY LINKED IN LOVE, ARE MANY TIMES ENFORCED TO UNDERGO: ACCORDING AS THEIR OWNE WIT, AND CAPACITIE OF THEIR SURPRIZERS, DRIVE THEM TO IN EXTREMITIES.

PERONELLA *hid a yong man her friend and Lover, under a great brewing Fat, upon the sodaine returning home of her Husband; who told her, that hee had solde the saide Fat, and brought him that bought it, to carry it away. Peronella replyed, that shee had formerly solde it unto another, who was now underneath it, to see whether it were whole and sound, or no. Whereupon, he being come forth from under it; she caused her Husband to make it neate and cleane, and so the last buyer carried it away.*

NOT without much laughter and good liking, was the Tale of Madame Æmillia listened unto, and both the prayers commended to be sound and soveraigne: but it being ended, the King commaunded Philostratus, that hee should follow next in order, whereupon thus he began.

Deare Ladies, the deceites used by men towards your sexe, but especially Husbands, have bene so great and many, as when it hath sometime happened, or yet may, that husbands are requited in the self-same kinde: you need not finde fault at any such accident, either by knowledge thereof afterward, or hearing the same reported by any one; but rather you should referre it to generall publication, to the end, that immodest men may know, and finde it for trueth, that if they have apprehension and capacity; women are therein not a jote inferiour to them. Which cannot but redound to your great benefite, because, when any one knoweth, that another is as cunning and subtile as himselfe; he will not be so rashly adventurous in deceite. And who maketh any doubt, that if those sleights and trickes, whereof this dayes argument may give us occasion to speake, should afterwardes be put in execution by men: would it not minister just reason, of punishing themselves for beguiling you, knowing, that (if you please) you have the like abilitie in your owne power? Mine intent therefore is to tell you, what a woman (though but of meane qualitie) did to her husband, upon a sodaine, and in a moment (as it were) for her owne safety.

Not long since, there lived in Naples, an honest meane man, who did take to Wife, a fayre and lustie young Woman, being named Peronella. He professing the Trade of a Mason, and shee Carding and Spinning, maintained themselves in a reasonable condition, abating and abounding as their Fortunes served. It came to passe, that a certayne young man, well observing the beauty and good parts of Peronella, became much addicted in affection towardes her: and by his often and secret sollicitations, which he found not to be unkindely entertayned; his successe proved answerable to his hope, no unindifferencie appearing in their purposes, but where her estate seemed weakest, his supplies made an addition of more strength.

Now, for their securer meeting, to stand cleare from all matter of scandal or detection, they concluded in this order between themselves. Lazaro, for so was Peronellaes Husband named, being an earely riser every morning, either to seeke for worke, or to effect it being undertaken: this amorous friend being therewith acquainted, and standing in some such convenient place, where hee could see Lazaroes departure from his house, and yet himselfe no way discerned; poore Lazaro was no sooner gone, but presently he enters the house, which stood in a verie solitarie street, called the Avorio. Many mornings had they thus met together, to their no meane delight and contentation, till one especiall morning among the rest, when Lazaro was gone forth to worke, and Striguario (so was the amorous young man named) visiting Peronella in the house: upon a verie urgent occasion, Lazaro returned backe againe, quite contrary to his former wont, keeping foorth all day, and never comming home till night.

Finding his doore to be fast lockt, and he having knockt softlie once or twice, he spake in this manner to himselfe. Fortune I thanke thee, for albeit thou hast made mee poore, yet thou hast bestowed a better blessing on me, in matching me with so good, honest, and loving a Wife. Behold, though I went early out of my house, her selfe hath risen in the cold to shut the doore, to prevent the entrance of theeves, or any other that might offend us. Peronella having heard what her husband sayde, and knowing the manner of his knocke, said fearfully to Striguario. Alas deare friend, what shall wee doe? I am little lesse then a dead Woman: For, Lazaro my Husband is come backe again, and I know not what to do or say. He never returned in this order before now, doubtlesse, hee saw when you entred the doore; and for the safety of your honour and mine: creepe under this brewing Fat, till I have opened the doore, to know the reason of his so soone returning.

Striguario made no delaying of the matter, but got himselfe closelie under the Fat, and Peronella opening the doore for her husbands enterance, with a frowning countenance, spake thus unto him. What meaneth this so early returning home againe this morning? It seemeth, thou intendest to do nothing to day, having brought backe thy tooles in thy hands? If such be thine intent, how shall we live? Where shal we have bread to fill our bellies? Dooest thou thinke, that I will suffer thee to pawne my gowne, and other poore garments, as heeretofore thou hast done? I that card and spinne both night and day, till I have worne the flesh from my fingers; yet all will hardly finde oyle to maintaine our Lampe. Husband, husband, there is not one neighbour dwelling by us, but makes a mockerie of me, and tels me plainly, that I may be ashamed to drudge and moyle as I do; wondering not a little, how I am able to endure it; and thou returnest home with thy hands in thy hose, as if thou hadst no worke at all to do this day.

Having thus spoken, she fell to weeping, and then thus began again. Poore wretched woman as I am, in an unfortunate houre was I borne, and in a much worse, when I was made thy Wife. I could have had a proper, handsome yong man; one, that would have maintained mee brave and gallantly: but, beast as I was, to forgoe my good, and cast my selfe away on such a beggar as thou art, and whom none wold have had, but such an Asse as I. Other women live at hearts ease, and in jollity, have their amorous friends and loving Paramours, yea, one, two, three at once, making their husbands looke like a Moone cressent, wheron they shine Sun-like, with amiable lookes, because they know not how to helpe it: when I (poore foole) live heere at home a miserable life, not daring once to dreame of such follies, an innocent soule, heartlesse and harmelesse.

Many times, sitting and sighing to my selfe: Lord, thinke I, of what mettall am I made? Why should not I have a Friend in a corner, aswell as others have? I am flesh and blood, as they are, not made of brasse or iron, and therefore subject to womens frailty. I would thou shouldest know it husband, and I tell it thee in good earnest; That if I would doe ill, I could quickely finde a friend at a neede. Gallants there are good store, who (of my knowledge) love me dearely, and have made me very large and liberall promises, of Golde, Silver, Jewels, and gay Garments, if I would extend them the least favour. But my heart will not suffer me, I never was the daughter of such a mother, as had so much as a thought of such matters: no, I thanke our blessed Ladie, and S. Friswid for it: and yet thou returnest home againe, when thou shouldst be at Worke.

Lazaro, who stoode all this while like a well-beleeving Logger-head, demurely thus answered. Alas good Wife! I pray you bee not so angry, I never had so much as an ill thought of you, but know wel enough what you are, and have made good proofe thereof this morning. Understand therefore patiently (sweet Wife) that I went forth to my work as dayly I use to do, little dreaming (as I thinke you doe not) that it had bene Holy-day. Wife, this is the Feast day of Saint Galeone; whereon we may in no wise worke, and this is the reason of my so soone returning. Neverthelesse (dear Wife) I was not carelesse of our Houshold provision: For, though we worke not, yet we must have foode, which I have provided for more then a moneth. Wife, I remembred the brewing Fat, whereof we have little or no use at all, but rather it is a trouble to the house, then otherwise. I met with an honest Friend, who stayeth without at the doore, to him I have sold the Fat for ten Gigliatoes, and he tarrieth to take it away with him.

How Husband? replied Peronella, Why now I am worse offended then before. Thou that art a man, walkest every where, and shouldst be experienced in worldly affaires: wouldst thou bee so simple, as to sell such a brewing Fat for ten Gigliatoes? Why, I that am a poore ignorant woman, a house-Dove, sildome going out of my doore: have sold it already for twelve Gigliatoes, to a very honest man, who (even a little before thy comming home) came to me, we agreed on the bargaine, and he is now underneath the Fat, to see whether it be sound or no. When credulous Lazaro heard this, he was better contented then ever, and went to him that taried at the doore, saying. Good man, you may goe your way, for, whereas you offered me but ten Gigliatoes for the Fat, my loving wife hath sold it for twelve, and I must maintaine what shee hath done: so the man departed, and the variance ended.

Peronella then saide to her husband. Seeing thou art come home so luckily, helpe me to lift up the Fat, that the man may come foorth, and then you two end the bargaine together. Striguario, who thogh he was mewed up under the tubbe, had his eares open enough; and hearing the witty excuse of Peronella, tooke himselfe free from future feare: and being come from under the Fat, pretending also, as if he had herd nothing, nor saw Lazaro, looking round about him, said. Where is this good woman? Lazaro stepping forth boldly like a man, replyed: Heere am I, what would you have Sir? Thou? quoth Striguario, what art thou? I ask for the good wife, with whom I made my match for the Fat. Honest Gentleman (answered Lazaro) I am that honest Womans Husband, for lacke of a better, and I will maintaine whatsoever my Wife hath done.

I crie you mercie Sir, replyed Striguario, I bargained with your Wife for this brewing Fat, which I finde to be whole and sound: only it is uncleane within, hard crusted with some dry soile upon it, which I know not well how to get off, if you will be the meanes of making it cleane, I have the money heere ready for it. For that Sir (quoth Peronella) take you no care, although no match at all had beene made, what serves my Husband for, but to make it cleane? Yes forsooth Sir, answered sily Lazaro, you shall have it neate and cleane before you pay the mony.

So, stripping himselfe into his shirt, lighting a Candle, and taking tooles fit for the purpose; the Fat was whelmed over him, and he being within it, wrought untill he sweated, with scraping and scrubbing. So that these poore Lovers, what they could not accomplish as they wold, necessity enforced them to performe as they might. And Peronella, looking in at the vent-hole, where the Liquor runneth forth for the meshing; seemed to instruct her husband in the businesse, as espying those parts where the Fat was fowlest, saying: There, there Lazaro, tickle it there, the Gentleman payes well for it, and is worthy to have it: but see thou do thy selfe no harme good Husband. I warrant thee Wife, answered Lazaro, hurt not your selfe with leaning your stomacke on the Fat, and leave the cleansing of it to me. To be breefe, the Brewing Fat was neatly cleansed, Peronella and Striguario both well pleased, the money paide, and honest meaning Lazaro not discontented.

THE THIRD NOVELL

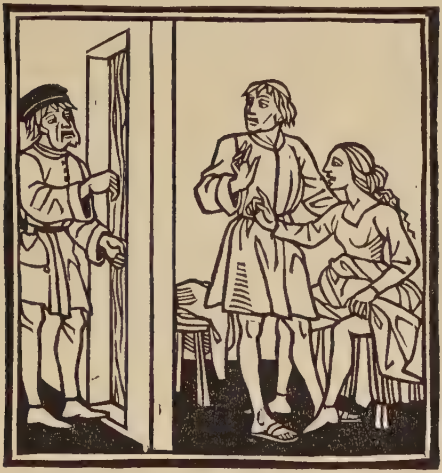
SERVING AS A FRIENDLY ADVERTISEMENT TO MARRIED WOMEN, THAT MONKS, FRIARS, AND PRIESTS MAY BE NONE OF THEIR GOSSIPS, IN REGARD OF UNAVOYDABLE PERILLES ENSUING THEREBY.

FRIAR *Reynard, falling in love with a Gentlewoman, Wife to a man of good account; found the meanes to become her Gossip. Afterward, he being conferring closely with her in her Chamber, and her Husband coming sodainly thither: she made him beleeve, that he came thither for no other end; but to cure his God-sonne by a charme, of a dangerous disease which he had by Wormes.*

PHILOSTRATUS told not this Tale so covertly, concerning Lazaros simplicity, and Peronellaes witty policy; but the Ladies found a knot in the rush, and laughed not a little, at his queint manner of discoursing it. But upon the conclusion, the King looking upon Madam Eliza, willed her to succeede next, which as willingly she granted, and thus began. Pleasant Ladies, the charme or conjuration wherwith Madam Æmillia laid her night-walking Spirit, maketh me remember a Novell of another enchantment; which although it carrieth not commendation equall to the other, yet I intend to report it, because it suteth with our present purpose, and I cannot sodainly be furnisht with another, answerable thereto in nature.

You are to understand then, that there lived in Siena, a proper yong man, of good birth and well friended, being named Reynard. Earnestly he affected his neere dwelling neighbour, a beautifull Gentlewoman, and wife to a man of good esteeme: of whom hee grew halfe perswaded, that if he could (without suspition) compasse private conference with her, he should reach the height of his amorous desires. Yet seeing no likely meanes wherewith to further his hope, and shee being great with childe, he resolved to become a Godfather to the childe, at such time as it should be brought to Christening. And being inwardly acquainted with her Husband, who was named Credulano; such familiar intercourses passed betweene them, both of Reynards kinde offer, and Credulanoes as courteous acceptance, that hee was set downe for a Gossippe.

Reynard being thus embraced for Madam Agnesiaes Gossip, and this proving the onely colourable meanes, for his safer permission of speech with her, to let her now understand by word of mouth, what long before she collected by his lookes and behaviour: it fell out no way beneficiall to him, albeit Agnesia seemed not nice or scrupulous in hearing, yet she had a more precious care of her honor. It came to passe, within a while after (whether by seeing his labour vainly spent, or some other urgent occasion moving him thereto, I know not) Reynard would needs enter into Religion, and whatsoever strictnesse or austeritie hee found to be in that kinde of life, yet he determined to persevere therein, whether it were for his good or ill. And although within a short space, after he was thus become a Religious Monke, hee seemed to forget the former love which he bare to his gossip Agnesia, and divers other enormous vanities beside: yet let me tell you, successe of time tutord him in them againe; and, without any respect to his poore holy habite, but rather in contempt thereof (as it were) he tooke an especiall delight, in wearing garments of much richer esteeme, yet favoured by the same Monasticall profession, appearing (in all respects) like a Court-Minion or Favourite, of a sprightly and Poeticall disposition, for composing Verses, Sonnets, and Canzons, singing them to sundry excellent instruments, and yet not greatly curious of his company, so they were some of the best, and Madame Agnesia one, his former Gossip.



But why doe I trouble my selfe, in talking thus of our so lately converted Friar, holy Father Reynard, when they of longer standing, and reputed meerely for Saints in life, are rather much more vile then hee? Such is the wretched condition of this world, that they shame not (fat, foggie, and nastie Abbey-lubbers) to shew how full-fedde they live in their Cloysters, with cherry cheekes, and smooth shining lookes, gay and gaudy garments, far from the least expression of humility, not walking in the streets like Doves: but high-crested like Cockes, with well cramd gorges. Nay, which is worse, if you did but see their Chambers furnished with Gally-pots of Electuaries, precious Unguents, Apothecary Boxes, filled with various Confections, Conserves, excellent Perfumes, and other goodly Glasses of artificiall Oyles and Waters: beside Rundlets and small Barrels full of Greeke Wine, Muscatella, Lachrime Christi, and other such like most precious Wines, so that (to such as see them) they seeme not to bee Chambers of Religious men; but rather Apothecaries Shoppes, or appertaining to Druggists, Grocers, or Perfumers.

It is no disgrace to them to be Gowty; because when other men know it not, they alledge, that strict fasting, feeding on grosse meates (though never so little,) continuall studying, and such like restraints from the bodies freer exercise, maketh them subject to many infirmities. And yet, when any one of them chanceth to fall sicke, the Physitian must minister no such counsell to them, as Chastity, Abstinence from voluptuous meats, Discipline of the body, or any of those matters appertaining to a modest religious life. For, concerning the plaine, vulgar, and Plebeian people, these holy Fathers are perswaded, that they know nothing really belonging to a sanctimonious life; as long watching, praying, discipline and fasting, which (in themselves) are not able, to make men look leane, wretched, and pale. Because Saint Dominicke, Saint Fraunces, and divers other holy Saints beside, observed the selfesame religious orders and constitutions, as now their carefull successors do. Moreover, in example of those fore-named Saints, who went wel cloathed, though they had not three Garments for one, nor made of the finest Woollen excellent cloath: but rather of the very coarsest of all other, and of the common ordinary colour, to expell cold onely, but not to appear brave or gallant, deceyving thereby infinite simple credulous soules, whose purses (neverthelesse) are their best pay-masters.

But leave we this, and returne wee backe to vertuous Fryar Reynard, who falling againe to his former appetites; became an often visitant of his Gossip Agnesia, and now hee had learned such a blushlesse kinde of boldnesse; that he durst be more instant with her (concerning his privie sute) then ever formerly he had bin, yea, even to solicite the enjoying of his immodest desires. The good Gentlewoman, seeing her selfe so importunately pursued, and Friar Reynard appearing now (perhappes) of sweeter and more delicate complexion, then at his entrance into Religion: at a set time of his secret communing with her; she answered him in as apt tearmes, as they use to do, who are not greatly sqeamish, in granting matters demanded of them.

Why how now Friar Reynard? quoth shee, Doe Godfathers use to move such questions? Whereto the Friar thus replyed. Madam, when I have laide off this holy habite (which is a matter very easie for mee to do) I shall seeme in your eye, in all respects made like another man, quite from the course of any Religious life. Agnesia, biting the lip with a prety smile, said; O my faire Starres! You will never bee so unfriendly to me. What? You being my Gossip, would you have me consent unto such a sinne? Our blessed Lady shield mee, for my ghostly Father hath often told me, that it is utterly unpardonable: but if it were, I feare too much confiding on mine owne strength. Gossip, Gossip, answered the Friar, you speake like a Foole, and feare (in this case) is wholly frivolous, especially, when the motions mooved by such an one as my selfe, who (upon repentance) can grant you pardon and indulgence presently. But I pray you let mee aske you one question, Who is the neerest Kinsman to your Son; either I, that stood at the Font for his Baptisme, or your Husband that begot him? The Lady made answere, that it was her Husband. You say very true Gossip, replyed the Friar, and yet notwithstanding, doth not your Husband (both at boord and bed) enjoy the sweet benefit of your company? Yes, said the Lady, why shold he not? Then Lady (quoth Reynard) I, who am not so neere a Kinsman to your Sonne, as your Husband is, why may ye not afford mee the like favour, as you do him? Agnesia, who was no Logitian, and therefore could not stand on any curious answer, especially being so cuningly moved; beleeved, or rather made shew of beleeving, that the Godfather said nothing but truth, and thus answered. What woman is she (Gossip) that knoweth how to answer your strange speeches? And, how it came to passe, I know not, but such an agreement passed betweene them, that, for once onely (so it might not infrindge the league of Gossip-ship, but that title to countenance their further intent) such a favour should be affoorded, so it might stand cleare from suspition.

An especiall time being appointed, when this amorous Combate should be fought in loves field, Friar Reynard came to his Gossips house, where none being present to hinder his purpose, but onely the Nursse which attended on the child, who was an indifferent faire and proper woman: his holy brother that came thither in his company (because Friars were not allowed to walke alone) was sent aside with her into the Pigeon loft, to enstruct her in a new kinde of Pater noster, lately devised in their holy Convent. In the meane while, as Friar Reynard and Agnesia were entring into hir chamber, she leading her little son by the hand, and making fast the doore for their better safety: the Friar laide by his holie habit, Cowle, Hood, Booke, and Beads, to bee (in all respects) as other men were. No sooner were they thus entred the Chamber, but her husband Credulano, being come into the house, and unseen of any, staid not till he was at the Chamber doore, where hee knockt, and called for his Wife.

She hearing his voice: Alas Gossip (quoth she) what shall I do? My Husband knocketh at the doore, and now he will perceive the occasion of our so familiar acquaintance. Reynard being stript into his Trusse and straite Strouses, began to tremble and quake exceedingly. I heare your Husbands tongue Gossip, said he, and seeing no harme as yet hath bin done, if I had but my garments on againe; wee would have one excuse or other to serve the turne, but till then you may not open the doore. As womens wits are sildome gadding abroad, when any necessitie concerneth them at home: even so Agnesia, being sodainly provided of an invention, both how to speake and carry her selfe in this extreamitie, saide to the Friar. Get on your garments quickely, and when you are cloathed, take your little God-son in your armes, and listning wel what I shall say, shape your answeres according to my words, and then refer the matter to me. Credulano had scarsely ended his knocking, but Agnesia stepping to the doore said: Husband, I come to you. So she opened the doore, and (going forth to him) with a chearefull countenance thus spake. Beleeve me Husband, you could not have come in a more happy time, for our yong Son was sudainly extreamly sicke, and (as good Fortune would have it) our loving Gossip Reynard chanced to come in; and questionlesse, but by his good prayers and other religious paynes, we had utterly lost our childe, for he had no life left in him.

Credulano, being as credulous as his name imported, seemed ready to swoune with sodaine conceit: Alas good wife (quoth he) how hapned this? Sit downe sweet Husband said she, and I wil tell you al. Our child was sodainly taken with a swouning, wherein I being unskilful, did verily suppose him to be dead, not knowing what to doe, or say. By good hap, our Gossip Reynard came in, and taking the childe up in his armes, said to me. Gossip, this is nothing else but Wormes in the bellie of the childe, which ascending to the heart, must needs kill the child, without all question to the contrary. But be of good comfort Gossip, and feare not, for I can charme them in such sort, that they shall all die, and before I depart hence, you shall see your Son as healthfull as ever. And because the maner of this charm is of such nature, that it required prayer and exorcising in two places at once: Nurse went up with his Holye Brother into our Pigeon loft, to exercise their devotion there, while we did the like heere. For none but the mother of the childe must bee present at such a mystery, nor any enter to hinder the operation of the charme; which was the reason of making fast the Chamber doore. You shall see Husband anon the Childe, which is indifferently recovered in his armes, and if Nurse and his holy Brother were returned from theyr meditations; he saith, that the charme would then be fully effected: for the child beginneth to looke chearefull and merry.

So deerely did Credulano love the childe, that hee verily beleeved, what his Wife had saide, never misdoubting any other treachery: and, lifting up his eyes, with a vehement sigh, said. Wife, may not I goe in and take the child into my armes? Oh no, not yet good husband (quoth she) in any case, least you should overthrow all that is done. Stay but a little while, I will go in againe, and if all bee well, then will I call you. In went Agnesia againe, making the doore fast after her, the Fryar having heard all the passed speeches, by this time he was fitted with his habite, and taking the childe in his armes, he said to Agnesia. Gossip methought I heard your Husbands voice, is hee at your Chamber doore? Yes Gossip Reynard (quoth Credulano without, while Agnesia opened the doore, and admitted him entrance) indeede it is I. Come in Sir, I pray you, replyed the Friar, and heere receive your childe of mee, who was in great danger, of your ever seeing him any more alive. But you must take order, to make an

Image of waxe, agreeing with the stature of the childe, to be placed on the Altar before the Image of S. Frances, by whose merites the childe is thus restored to health.

The childe, beholding his Father, made signes of comming to him, rejoycing merrily, as yong infants use to do, and Credulano clasping him in his armes, wept with conceite of joy, kissing him infinitely, and heartily thanking his Gossip Reynard, for the recovery of his God-son. The Friars brotherly Companion, who had given sufficient enstructions to the Nurse, and a small purse full of Sisters white thred, which a Nunne (after shrift) had bestowed on him, upon the husbands admittance into the Chamber (which they easily heard) came in also to them, and seeing all in very good tearmes, they holpe to make a joyfull conclusion, the Brother saying to Friar Reynard: Brother, I have finished all those foure Jaculatory prayers, which you commanded me.

Brother, answered Reynard, you have a better breath then I, and your successe hath prooved happier then mine, for before the arrivall of my Gossip Credulano, I could accomplish but two Jaculatory prayers onely. But it appeareth, that we have both prevailed in our devout desires, because the childe is perfectly cured. Credulano calling for Wine and good cheare, feasted both the Friars very jocondly, and then conducting them forth of his house, without any further intermission, caused the childs Image of waxe to be made, and sent it to be placed on the Altar of Saint Frances, among many other the like oblations.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS MANIFESTED, THAT THE MALICE AND SUBTILTY OF A WOMAN, SURPASSETH ALL THE ART OR WIT IN MAN.

TOFANO *in the night season, did locke his wife out of his house, and shee not prevailing to get entrance againe, by all the entreaties she could possiblie use: made him beleeve that she had throwne her selfe into a Well, by casting a great stone into the same Well. Tofano hearing the fall of the stone into the Well, and being perswaded that it was his Wife indeed; came forth of his house, and ran to the Welles side. In the meane while, his wife gotte into the house, made fast the doore against her Husband, and gave him many reproachfull speeches.*

So soone as the King perceyved, that the Novell reported by Madame Eliza was finished: hee turned himselfe to Madame Lauretta, and told her it was his pleasure, that she should now begin the next, whereto she yeelded in this manner. O Love: What, and how many are thy prevailing forces? How straunge are thy foresights? And how admirable thine attempts? Where is, or ever was the Philosopher or Artist, that could enstruct the wiles, escapes, preventions, and demonstrations, which sodainly thou teachest such, as are thy apt and understanding Schollers indeede? Certaine it is, that the documents and eruditions of all other whatsoever, are weak, or of no worth, in respect of thine: as hath notably appeared, by the remonstrances already past, and whereto (worthy Ladies) I wil adde another of a simple woman, who taught her husband such a lesson, as shee never learned of any, but Love himselfe.

There dwelt sometime in Arezzo (which

is a faire Village of Tuscany) a rich man, named Tofano, who enjoyed in marriage a young beautifull woman, called Cheta: of whom (without any occasion given, or reason knowne to himselfe) he became exceeding jealous. Which his wife perceyving, she grew much offended thereat, and tooke it in great scorne, that she should be servile to so vile and slavish a condition. Oftentimes, she demanded of him, from whence this jealousie in him received originall, he having never seene or heard of any; he could make her no other answer, but what his owne bad humour suggested, and drove him every day (almost) to deaths doore, by feare of that which no way needed. But, whether as a just scourge for this his grosse folly, or a secret decree, ordained to him by Fortune and the Fates, I am not able to distinguish: It came so to passe, that a young Gallant made meanes to enjoy her favour, and she was so discreetly wise in judging of his worthinesse; that affection passed so farre mutually betweene them, as nothing wanted, but effects to answere words, suited with time and place convenient, for which order was taken as best they might, yet to stand free from all suspition.

Among many other evill conditions, very frequent and familiar in her husband Tofano; he tooke a great delight in drinking, which not only he held to be a commendable quality, but was alwaies so often solicited thereto: that Cheta her selfe began to like and allow it in him, feeding his humor so effectually, with quaffing and carowsing, that (at any time when she listed) she could make him bowsie beyonde all measure: and leaving him sleeping in this drunkennesse, would alwayes get her selfe to bed. By helpe heereof, she compassed the first familiarity with her friend, yea, divers times after, as occasion served: and so confidently did she builde on her husbands drunkennesse, that not onely shee adventured to bring her friend home into her owne house; but also would as often go to his, which was some-what neere at hand, and abide with him there, the most part of the night season.

While Cheta thus continued on these amorous courses, it fortuned, that her slye suspitious husband, beganne to perceive, that though shee drunke very much with him, yea, untill he was quite spent and gone: yet she remained fresh and sober still, and therby imagined strange matters, that he being fast asleepe, his wife then tooke advantage of his drowsinesse, and might—— and so forth. Beeing desirous to make experience of this his distrust, hee returned home at night (not having drunke any thing all the whole day) dissembling both by his words and behaviour, as if he were notoriously drunke indeede. Which his Wife constantly beleeving, saide to her selfe: That hee had now more neede of sleepe, then drinke; getting him immediately into his warme bed; and then going downe the staires againe, softly went out of doores unto her Friends house, as formerly she had used to do, and there shee remained untill midnight.

Tofano perceiving that his Wife came not to bed, and imagining to have heard his doore both open and shut: arose out of his bed, and calling his Wife Cheta divers times, without any answere returned: hee went downe the staires, and finding the doore but closed too, made it fast and sure on the inside, and then got him up to the window, to watch the returning home of his wife, from whence shee came, and then to make her conditions apparantly knowne. So long there he stayed, till at the last she returned indeede, and finding the doore so surely shut, shee was exceeding sorrowful, essaying how she might get it open by strength: which when Tofano had long suffered her in vaine to approove, thus hee spake to her. Cheta, Cheta, all thy labour is meerely lost, because heere is no entrance allowed for thee; therefore return to the place from whence thou camest, that all thy friends may judge of thy behaviour, and know what a night-walker thou art become.

The woman hearing this unpleasing language, began to use all humble entreaties, desiring him (for charities sake) to open the doore and admit her entrance, because she had not bin in any such place, as his jelous suspition might suggest to him: but onely to visit a weak and sickly neighbour, the nights being long, she not (as yet) capeable of sleepe, nor willing to sit alone in the house. But all her perswasions served to no purpose, he was so setled in his owne opinion, that all the Town should now see her nightly gading, which before was not so much as suspected. Cheta seeing, that faire meanes would not prevaile, shee entred into roughe speeches and threatnings, saying: If thou wilt not open the doore and let me come in, I will so shame thee, as never base man was. As how I pray thee? answered Tofano, what canst thou do to me?

The woman, whom love had inspired with sprightly counsell, ingeniously enstructing her what to do in this distresse, stearnly thus replyed. Before I will suffer any such shame as thou intendest towards mee, I will drowne my selfe heere in this Well before our doore, where being found dead, and thy villanous jealousie so apparantly knowne, beside thy more then beastly drunkennesse: all the neighbours will constantly beleeve, that thou didst first strangle me in the house, and afterwardes threw me into this Well. So either thou must flie upon the supposed offence, or lose all thy goodes by banishment, or (which is much more fitting for thee) have thy head smitten off, as a wilfull murtherer of thy wife; for all will judge it to be no otherwise. All which wordes, mooved not Tofano a jot from his obstinat determination: but he still persisting therin, thus she spake. I neither can nor will longer endure this base Villanie of thine: to the mercy of heaven I commit my soul, and stand there my wheele, a witnesse against so hard-hearted a murtherer.

No sooner had she thus spoke, but the night being so extreamly dark, as they could not discerne one another; Cheta went to the Well, where finding a verie great stone, which lay loose upon the brim of the Well, even as if it had beene layde there on purpose, shee cried out aloud, saying. Forgive me faire heavens, and so threw the stone downe into the Well. The night being very still and silent, the fal of the great stone made such a dreadfull noise in the Well; that he hearing it at the Windowe, thought verily she had drowned her selfe indeede. Whereupon, running downe hastily, and taking a Bucket fastened to a strong Cord: he left the doore wide open, intending speedily to helpe her. But she standing close at the doores entrance, before he could get to the Wels side; she was within the house, softly made the doore fast on the inside, and then went up to the Window, where Tofano before had stood talking to her.

While he was thus dragging with his Bucket in the Well, crying and calling Cheta, take hold good Cheta, and save thy life: she stood laughing in the Window, saying. Water should bee put into Wine before a man drinkes it, and not when he hath drunke too much already. Tofano hearing his Wife thus to flout him out of his Window, went back to the doore, and finding it made fast against him: he willed hir to grant him entrance. But she, forgetting all gentle Language, which formerly she had used to him: in meere mockery and derision (yet intermixed with some sighes and teares, which women are saide to have at command) out aloud (because the Neighbours should heare her) thus she replyed.

Beastly drunken Knave as thou art, this night thou shalt not come within these doores, I am no longer able to endure thy base behaviour, it is more then high time, that thy course of life should bee publiquely known, and at what drunken houres thou returnest home to thy house. Tofano, being a man of very impatient Nature, was as bitter unto her in words on the other side, which the Neighbours about them (both men and Women) hearing; looked forth of their Windowes, and demaunding a reason for this their disquietnesse, Cheta (seeming as if she wept) sayde.

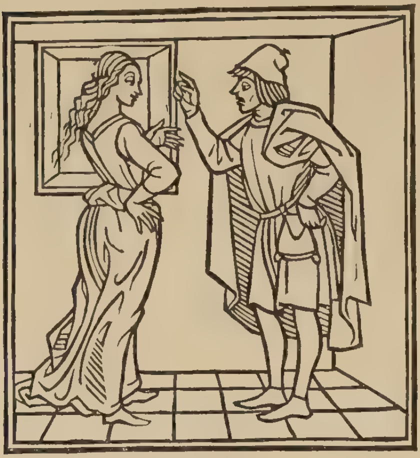
Alas my good Neighbours, you see at what unfitting houres, this bad man comes home to his house, after hee hath lyen in a Taverne all day drunke, sleeping and snorting like a Swine. You are my honest witnesses, how long I have suffered this beastlinesse in him, yet neyther your good counsell, nor my too often loving admonitions, can worke that good which wee have expected. Wherefore, to try if shame can procure any amendment, I have shut him out of doores, until his drunken fit be over-past, and so he shall stand to coole his feet.

Tofano (but in very uncivill maner) told her being abroad that night, and how she had used him: But the Neighbours seeing her to be within the house, and beleeving her, rather then him, in regard of his too well knowne ill qualities; very sharpely reproved him, gave him grosse speeches, pittying that any honest Woman should be so continually abused. Now my good Neighbours (quoth she) you see what manner of man he is. What would you thinke of me, if I should walk the streets thus in the night time, or be so late out of mine owne house, as this dayly Drunkard is? I was affraid least you would have given credit to his dissembling speeches, when he told you, that I was at the Welles side, and threw something into the Well: but that I know your better opinion of me, and how sildome I am to be seene out of doores, although he would induce your sharper judgement of me, and lay that shame upon me, wherein he hath sinned himselfe.

The Neighbours, both men and Women, were all very severely incensed against Tofano, condemning him for his great fault that night committed, and avouching his wife to be vertuous and honest. Within a little while, the noise passing from Neighbour to Neighbour, at the length it came to the eares of her Kindred, who forthwith resorted thither, and hearing how sharpely the Neighbours reprehended Tofano: they tooke him, soundly bastanadoed him, and hardly left any bone of him unbruised. Afterward, they went into the house, tooke all such things thence as belonged to hir, taking hir also with them to their dwelling, and threatning Tofano with further infliction of punishment, both for his drunkennesse, and causlesse jealousie.

Tofano perceyving how curstly they had handled him, and what crooked meanes might further be used against him, in regard her Kindred and Friends were very mightie: thought it much better, patiently to suffer the wrong alreadie done him, then by obstinate contending to proceed further, and fare worse. He became a suter to her Kindred, that al might be forgotten and forgiven, in recompence whereof; he would not onely refraine from drunkennesse, but also, never more be jelous of his wife. This being faithfully promised, and Cheta reconciled to her Husband, all strife was ended, she enjoyed her friends favour, as occasion served, but yet with such discretion, as it was not noted. Thus the Coxcombe foole, was faine to purchase his peace, after a notorious wrong sustained, and further injuries to bee offered.

THE FIFT NOVELL



IN JUST SCORNE AND MOCKERY OF SUCH JEALOUS HUSBANDS, THAT WILL BE SO IDLE HEADED UPON NO OCCASION. AND YET WHEN THEY HAVE GOOD REASON FOR IT, DO LEAST OF ALL SUSPECT ANY SUCH INJURY.

A JEALOUS *man, clouded with the habite of a Priest, became the Confessour to his owne Wife; who made him beleeve, that she was deepely in love with a Priest, which came every night, and lay with her. By meanes of which confession, while her jealous Husband watched the doore of his house; to surprize the Priest when he came: she that never meant to do amisse, had the company of a secret Friend, who came over the toppe of the house to visite her, while her foolish Husband kept the doore.*

MADAM Lauretta having ended her Novell, and every one commended the Woman, for fitting Tofano in his kinde; and, as his jealousie and drunkennesse justly deserved: the King (to prevent all losse of time) turned to Madame Fiammetta, commaunding her to follow next: whereuppon, very graciously, shee beganne in this manner.

Noble Ladies, the precedent Novell delivered by Madame Lauretta, maketh me willing to speake of another jealous man; as being halfe perswaded, that whatsoever is done to them by their Wives, and especially upon no occasion given, they doe no more then well becommeth them. And if those grave heads, which were the first instituters of lawes, had diligently observed all things; I am of the minde, that they would have ordained no other penalty for Women, then they appointed against such, as (in their owne defence) do offend any other. For jealous husbands, are meere insidiators of their Wives lives, and most diligent pursuers of their deaths, being lockt up in their houses all the Weeke long, imployed in nothing but domesticke drudging affayres: which makes them desirous of high Festivall dayes, to receive some litle comfort abroad, by an honest recreation or pastime, as Husbandmen in the fields, Artizans in our Citie, or Governours in our judiciall Courtes; yea, or as our Lord himselfe, who rested the seaventh day from all his travailes. In like manner, it is so willed and ordained by the Lawes, as well divine as humane, which have regard to the glory of God, and for the common good of every one; making distinction betweene those dayes appointed for labour, and the other determined for rest. Whereto jealous persons (in no case) will give consent, but all those dayes (which for other women are pleasing and delightfull) unto such, over whom they command, are most irksome, sadde and sorrowful, because then they are lockt up, and very strictly restrained. And if question wer urged, how many good women do live and consume away in this torturing hel of affliction: I can make no other answere, but such as feele it, are best able to discover it. Wherefore to conclude the proheme to my present purpose, let none be over rash in condemning women: for what they do to their husbands, being jealous without occasion; but rather commend their wit and providence.

Somtime (faire Ladies) there lived in Arimino, a Merchant, very rich in wealth and worldly possessions, who having a beautifull Gentlewoman to his wife, he became extreamly jelous of her. And he had no other reason for this foolish conceit; but, like as he loved hir dearly, and found her to be very absolutely faire: even so he imagined, that althogh she devised by her best meanes to give him content; yet others would grow enamored of her, because she appeared so amiable to al. In which respect, time might tutor her to affect some other beside himselfe: the onely common argument of every bad minded man, being weake and shallow in his owne understanding. This jelous humor increasing in him more and more, he kept her in such narrow restraint: that many persons condemned to death, have enjoyed larger libertie in their imprisonment. For, she might not bee present at Feasts, Weddings, nor goe to Church, or so much as to be seen at her doore: Nay, she durst not stand in her Window, nor looke out of her house, for any occasion whatsoever. By means whereof, life seemed most tedious and offensive to her, and she supported it the more impatiently, because shee knew her selfe not any way faulty.

Seeing her husband still persist in this shamefull course towards her; she studied, how she might best comfort her selfe in this desolate case: by devising some one meane or other (if any at all were to bee founde) wherby he might be requited in his kind, and wear that badge of shame whereof he was now but onely affraid. And because she could not gain so small a permission, as to be seene at any window, where (happily) she might have observed some one passing by in the street, discerning a litle parcell of her love: she remembred at length, that, in the next house to her Husbands (they both joyning close together) there dwelt a comely yong proper Gentleman, whose perfections carried correspondencie with her desires. She also considered with her selfe, that if there were any partition wall; such a chinke or cranny might easily be made therein, by which (at one time or other) she should gaine a sight of the young Gentleman, and finde an houre so fitting, as to conferre with him, and bestow her lovely favour on him, if he pleased to accept it. If successe (in this case) proved answerable to her hope, then thus she resolved to outrun the rest of her wearisome dayes, except the frensie of jealousie did finish her husbands loathed life before.

Walking from one roome to another, thorough every part of the house; and no wall escaping without diligent surveying; on a day, when her Husband was absent from home, she espyed in a corner very secret, an indifferent cleft in the Wall; which though it yeelded no full view on the other side, yet she plainly perceived it to be an handsome Chamber, and grew more then halfe perswaded, that either it might be the Chamber of Philippo (for so was the neighbouring yong Gentleman named) or else a passage guiding thereto. A Chambermaid of hers, who compassioned her case very much; made such observance, by her Mistresses direction, that she found it to be Philippoes bed Chamber, and where alwayes he used to lodge alone. By often visiting this rift or chinke in the Wall, especially when the Gentleman was there; and by throwing in little stones, flowers, and such like things, which fell still in his way as he walked: so farre she prevailed, that he stepping to the chinke, to know from whence they came; shee called softly to him, who knowing her voyce, there they had such private conference together, as was not any way displeasing to either. So that the chinke being made a little larger; yet so, as it could not be easily discerned: their mouthes might meete with kisses together, and their hands folded each in other; but nothing else to be performed, for continuall feare of her jealous husband.

Now the Feast of Christmasse drawing neere, the Gentlewoman said to her Husband; that, if it stood with his liking: she would do such duty as fitted with so solemne a time, by going earely in a morning unto Church, there to be confessed, and receive her Saviour, as other Christians did. How now? replied the jealous Asse, what sinnes have you committed, that should neede confession? How Husband? quoth she, what do you thinke me to be a Saint? Who knoweth not, I pray you, that I am as subject to sinne, as any other Woman living in the world? But my sins are not to be revealed to you, because you are no Priest. These words enflamed his jealousie more violently then before, and needes must he know what sinnes she had committed, and having resolved what to do in this case, made her answer: That hee was contented with her motion, alwaies provided, that she went to no other Church, then unto their owne Chappel, betimes in a morning; and their own Chaplaine to confesse her, or some other Priest by him appointed, but not any other: and then she to returne home presently againe. She being a woman of acute apprehension, presently collected his whole intention: but seeming to take no knowledge thereof, replyed, that she would not swerve from his direction.

When the appointed day was come, she arose very earely, and being prepared answerable to her owne liking, to the Chappell shee went as her Husband had appointed, where her jealous Husband (being much earlier risen then she) attended for her comming: having so ordred the matter with his Chaplaine, that he was cloathed in his Cowle, with a large Hood hanging over his eyes, that she should not know him, and so he went and sate downe in the Confessors place. Shee being entred into the Chappell, and calling for the Priest to heare her confession, he made her answer: that he could not intend it, but would bring her to another holy Brother, who was at better leysure then hee. So to her Husband he brought her, that seemed (in all respects) like the Confessor himselfe: save onely his Hood was not so closely veyled, but shee knew his beard, and said to her selfe. What a mad world is this, when jealousie can metamorphose an ordinary man into a Priest? But, let me alone with him, I meane to fit him with that which he lookes for.

So, appearing to have no knowledge at all of him, downe she fell at his feete, and he had conveyed a few Cherry stones into his mouth, to trouble his speech from her knowledge; for, in all things els, he thoght himselfe to be sufficiently fitted for her. In the course of her confession, she declared, that she was married to a most wicked jealous Husband, and with whom she lead a very hatefull life. Neverthelesse (quoth she) I am indifferently even with him, for I am beloved of an Holie Fryar, that every night commeth and lyeth with me. When the jealous Husband heard this, it stabbed him like a dagger to the heart, and, but for his greedy covetous desire to know more; he would faine have broke off confession, and got him gone. But, perceiving that it was his wisest course, he questioned further with his wife, saying: Why good Woman, doth not your husband lodge with you? Yes Sir, quoth she. How is it possible then (replyed the Husband) that the Friar can lodge there with you too?

She, dissembling a farre fetcht sigh, thus answered. Reverend Sir, I know not what skilfull Art the Fryar useth, but this I am sure, every doore in our house will flye open to him, so soone as he doth but touch it. Moreover, he told me, that when he commeth unto my Chamber doore, he speaketh certaine words to himselfe, which immediately casteth my Husband into a dead sleepe, and, understanding him to bee thus sleepily entranced: he openeth the doore, entreth in, lieth downe by me, and this every night he faileth not to do. The jealous Coxcomb angerly scratching his head, and wishing his wife halfe hangd, said: Mistresse, this is very badly done, for you should keepe your selfe from all men, but your husband onely. That shall I never doe, answered shee, because (indeed) I love him dearely. Why then (quoth our supposed Confessor) I cannot give you any absolution. I am the more sory Sir, said she, I came not hither to tell you any leasings, for if I could, yet I would not, because it is not good to fable with such Saint-like men as you are. You do therein (quoth hee) the better, and surely I am very sory for you, because in this dangerous condition, it will bee the utter losse of your soule: neverthelesse, both for your husbands sake and your owne, I will take some paines, and use such especiall prayers in your name, which may (perchance) greatly avayle you. And I purpose now and then, to send you a Novice or young Clearke of mine, whom you may safely acquaint with your minde, and signifie to me, by him, whether they have done you good, or no: and if they prove helpefull, then will we further proceed therein. Alas Sir, said she, never trouble your selfe, in sending any body to our house; because, if my Husband should know it, he is so extreamly jealous, as all the world cannot otherwise perswade him, but that he commeth thither for no honest intent, and so I shall live worse then now I do. Fear not that, good woman, quoth he, but beleeve it certainly, that I will have such a care in this case, as your Husband shall never speake thereof to you. If you can doe so Sir, sayde she, proceed I pray you, and I am well contented.

Confession being thus ended, and she receiving such pennance as hee appointed, she arose on her feete, and went to heare Masse; while our jealous Woodcocke (testily puffing and blowing) put off his Religious habite, returning home presently to his house, beating his braines al the way as he went, what meanes he might best devise, for the taking of his wife and the Friar together, whereby to have them both severely punished. His wife being come home from the Chappell, discerned by her Husbands lookes, that he was like to keepe but a sory Christmasse: yet he used his utmost industry, to conceale what he had done, and which she knew as well as himself. And he having fully resolved, to watch his own street doore the next night ensuing in person, in expectation of the Friars comming, saide to his Wife. I have occasion both to suppe and lodge out of my house this night, wherefore see you the streete doore to be surely made fast on the inside, and the doore at the middest of the staires, as also your own Chamber doore, and then (in Gods name) get you to bed. Whereto she answered, that all should be done as hee had appointed.

Afterward, when she saw convenient time, she went to the chink in the Wall, and making such a signe as shee was woont to doe: Phillippo came thither, to whom she declared all her mornings affayres, and what directions her husband had given her. Furthermore she saide, certaine I am, that he will not depart from the house, but sit and watch the doore without, to take one that comes not heere. If therefore, you can climbe over the house top, and get in at our gutter Window, you and I may conferre more familiarly together. The young Gentleman being no dullard, had his lesson quickly taught him; and when night was come, Geloso (for so must wee tearme the Cocke-braind husband) armes himselfe at all points, with a browne Bill in his hand, and so he sits to watch his owne doore. His Wife had made fast all the doores, especially that on the midst of the stayres, because he should not (by any means) come to her Chamber; and so, when the houre served, the Gentleman adventured over the house top, found the gutter Window, and the way conducting him to her Chamber, where I leave them to their further amorous conference.

Geloso, more than halfe mad with anger, first, because hee had lost his supper: next, having sitten almost all the night (which was extreamely cold and windie) his Armor much mollesting him, and yet he could see no Friar come: when day drew neere, and hee ashamed to watch there any longer; conveighed himselfe to some more convenient place, where putting off his Armes, and seeming to come from the place of his Lodging; about the ninth houre, he found his doore open, entred in, and went up the stayres, going to dinner with his Wife. Within a while after, according as Geloso had ordred the businesse, a youth came thither, seeming to be the Novice sent from the Confessor, and he being admitted to speake with her, demanded, whether shee were troubled or mollested that night passed, as formerly she had bin, and whether the partie came or no? The Woman, who knew well enough the Messenger (notwithstanding all his formall disguise) made answer: That the party expected, came not: but if hee had come, it was to no purpose; because her minde was now otherwise altred, albeit she changed not a jote from her amorous conclusion.

What should I now further say unto you? Geloso continued his watch many nights afterward, as hoping to surprize the Friar at his entrance, and his wife kept still her contented quarter, according as opportunitie served. In the conclusion, Geloso beeing no longer able to endure his bootlesse watching, nor some (more then ordinary) pleasing countenance in his wife: one day demaunded of her (with a very stearne and frowning brow) what secret sinnes shee had revealed to the ghostly Father, upon the day of her shrift? The Woman replyed, that she would not tell him, neyther was it a matter reasonable, or lawfull for her to doe. Wicked Woman, answered Geloso: I knowe them all well enough, even in despight of thee, and every word that thou spakest unto him. But Huswife, now I must further know, what the Fryar is, with whom you are so farre in love, and (by meanes of his enchantments) lyeth with you every night; tell me what and who he is, or else I meane to cut your throate.

The Woman immediately made answer, it was not true, that she was in love with any Fryar. How? quoth Geloso, didst not thou confesse so much to the Ghostly Father, the other day when thou wast at shrift? No Sir, sayde she, but if I did, I am sure he would not disclose it to you, except hee suffered you to bee there present, which is an Article beyonde his dutie. But if it were so, then I confesse freely, that I did say so unto him. Make an end then quickely Wife (quoth Geloso) and tell mee who the Friar is. The Woman fell into a hearty laughter, saying. It liketh me singularly well, when a wise man will suffer himselfe to be ledde by a simple Woman, even as a Sheepe is to the slaughter, and by the hornes. If once thou wast wise, that wisedome became utterly lost, when thou felst into that divellish frensie of jealousie, without knowing anie reason for it: for, by this beastlike and no manly humor, thou hast eclipsed no meane part of my glory, and womanly reputation.

Doest thou imagine Husband, that if I were so blinded in the eyes of my head, as thou art in them which should informe thine understanding; I could have found out the Priest, that would needs bee my Confessor? I knew thee Husband to be the man, and therefore I prepared my wit accordingly, to fit thee with the foolish imagination which thou soughtest for, and (indeed) gave it thee. For, if thou hadst beene wise, as thou makest the world to beleeve by outward apparance, thou wouldest never have expressed such a basenesse of minde, to borrow the coulour of a sanctified cloake, thereby to undermine the secrets of thine honest meaning Wife. Wherefore, to feede thee in thy fond suspition, I was the more free in my Confession, and tolde thee truely, with whom, and how heinously I had transgressed. Did I not tell thee, that I loved a Fryar? And art not thou he whom I love, being a Fryar, and my ghostly Father, though (to thine owne shame) thou madst thy selfe so? I said moreover, that there is not any doore in our house, that can keepe it selfe shut against him, but (when he pleaseth) he comes and lies with me. Now tell me Husband, What doore in our house hath (at any time) bin shut against thee, but they are freely thine owne, and grant thee entrance? Thou art the same Friar that confest me, and lieth every night with me, and so often as thou sentst thy yong Novice or Clearke to me, as often did I truly returne thee word, when the same Fryar lay with me. But (by jealousie) thou hast so lost thine understanding, that thou wilt hardly beleeve all this.

Alas good man, like an armed Watchman, thou satst at thine owne doore all a cold Winters night, perswading mee (poore silly credulous woman) that, upon urgent occasions, thou must needs suppe and lodge from home. Remember thy selfe therefore better heereafter, become a true understanding man, as thou shouldst bee, and make not thy selfe a mocking stocke to them, who knoweth thy jealous qualities, as well as I do, and be not so watchfull over me, as thou art. For I sweare by my true honesty, that if I were but as willing, as thou art suspitious: I could deceive thee, if thou hadst an hundred eyes, as Nature affords thee but two, and have my pleasures freely, yet thou be not a jot the wiser, or my credit any way impaired.

Our wonderfull wise Geloso, who (very advisedly) considred that he had wholly heard his wives secret confession, and dreamed now on no other doubt beside, but (perceiving by her speeches) how hee was become a scorne to al men: without returning other answer, confirmed his wife to bee both wise and honest, and now when he hadde just occasion to be jealous indeede, hee utterly forsware it, and counted them all Coxcombes that would be so misguided. Wherefore, she having thus wisely wonne the way to her owne desires, and he reduced into a more humane temper: I hope there was no more neede, of clambring over houses in the night time like Cats, nor walking in at gutter Windowes; but all abuses were honestly reformed.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS MANIFESTLY DISCERNED, THAT IF LOVE BE DRIVEN TO A NARROW STRAITE IN ANY OF HIS ATTEMPTS; YET HEE CAN ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE BY SOME OTHER SUPPLY.

MADAME *Isabella, delighting in the company of her affected Friend, named Lionello, and she being likewise beloved by Signior Lambertuccio: At the same time as shee had entertained Lionello, shee was also visited by Lambertuccio. Her Husband returning home in the very instant; shee caused Lambertuccio to run forth with a drawne sword in his hand, and (by that meanes) made an excuse sufficient for Lionello to her husband.*

WONDROUSLY pleasing to all the company, was the reported Novell of Madame Fiammetta, every one applauding the Womans wisedome, and that she had done no more, then as the jealous foole her husband justly deserved. But shee having ended, the King gave order unto Madame Pampinea, that now it was her turne to speake, whereupon, thus she began. There are no meane store of people who say (though very false and foolishly,) that Love maketh many to be out of their wits, and that such as fall in Love, do utterly loose their understanding. To mee this appeareth a very ydle opinion, as already hath beene approved by the related discourses, and shall also bee made manifest by another of mine owne.

In our City of Florence, famous for some good, though as many bad qualities, there dwelt (not long since) a Gentlewoman, endued with choice beauty and admirable perfections, being wife to Signior Beltramo, a very valiant Knight, and a man of great possessions. As oftentimes it commeth to passe, that a man cannot alwayes feede on one kind of bread, but his appetite will be longing after change: so fared it with this Lady, named Isabella, she being not satisfied with the delights of her Husband; grew enamoured of a young Gentleman, called Lionello, compleate of person and commendable qualities, albeit not of the fairest fortunes, yet his affection every way sutable to hers. And full well you know (faire Ladies) that where the mindes irreciprocally accorded, no dilligence wanteth for the desires execution: so this amorous couple, made many solemne protestations, untill they should bee friended by opportunity.

It fortuned in the time of their hopefull expectation a Knight, named Signior Lambertuccio, fell likewise in love with Isabella: but because he was somewhat unsightly of person, and utterly unpleasing in the eye, she grew regardlesse of his frequent solicitings, and would not accept either tokens, or letters. Which when hee saw, (being very rich and of great power) hee sought to compasse his intent by a contrary course, threatning her with scandall and disgrace to her reputation, and with his associates to bandie against her best friends. She knowing what manner of man he was, and how able to abuse any with infamous imputations, wisely returned him hopefull promises, though never meaning to performe any, but onely (Lady-like) to flatter and foole him therewith.

Some few miles distant from Florence, Beltramo had a Castle of pleasure, and there his Lady Isabella used to live all Summer, as all other doe the like, being so possessed. On a day, Beltramo being ridden from home, and she having sent for Lionello, to take the advantage of her Husbands absence; accordingly he went, not doubting but to winne what he had long expected. Signior Lambertuccio on the other side, meeting Beltramo riding from his Castle, and Isabella now fit to enjoy his company: gallops thither with all possible speede, because hee would bee no longer delayed. Scarcely was Lionello entred the Castle, and receiving directions by the waiting woman, to her Ladies Chamber: but Lambertuccio gallopped in at the Gate, which the woman perceiving, ranne presently and acquainted her Lady with the comming of Lambertuccio.

Now was shee the onely sorrowfull woman of the world; for nothing was now to bee feared, but stormes and tempests, because Lambertuccio, spake no other then Lightning and Thunder, and Lionello, (being no lesse affraide then shee) by her perswasion crept behind the bed, where he hid himselfe very contentedly. By this time Lambertuccio was dismounted from his Courser, which he fastened (by the bridle) to a ring in the wall, and then the waiting woman came to him, to guide him to her Lady and Mistresse: who stood ready at the staires head, graced him with a very acceptable welcome, yet marvelling much at his so sodaine comming. Lady (quoth he) I met your Husband upon the way, which granting mine accesse to see you; I come to claime your long delayed promise, the time being now so favourable for it.

Before he had uttered halfe these words, Beltramo, having forgot an especiall evidence in his Study, which was the onely occasion of his journey, came gallopping backe againe into the Castell Court, and seeing such a goodly Gelding stand fastened there, could not redily imagine who was the owner thereof. The waiting woman, upon the sight of her Masters entring into the Court, came to her Lady, saying: My Master Beltramo is returned backe, newly alighted, and (questionlesse) comming up the staires. Now was our Lady Isabella, ten times worse affrighted then before, (having two severall amourous suters in her house, both hoping, neither speeding, yet her credite lying at the stake for either) by this unexpected returne of her Husband. Moreover, there was no possible meanes, for the concealing of Signior Lambertuccio, because his Gelding stood in the open Court, and therefore made a shrewde presumption against her, upon the least doubtfull question urged.

Neverthelesse, as womens wits are alwayes best upon sudden constraints, looking forth of her window, and espying her Husband preparing to come up: she threw her selfe on her day Couch, speaking thus (earnestly) to Lambertuccio. Sir, if ever you loved mee, and would have me faithfully to beleeve it, by the instant safety both of your owne honour, and my life, doe but as I advise you. Forth draw your Sword, and, with a stearne countenance, threatning death and destruction: run downe the staires, and when you are beneath, say. I sweare by my best fortunes, although I misse of thee now heere, yet I will be sure to finde thee some where else. And if my Husband offer to stay you, or moove any question to you: make no other answere, but what you formerly spake in fury. Beside, so soone as you are mounted on horsebacke, have no further conference with him, upon any occasion whatsoever; to prevent all suspition in him, of our future intendments.

Lambertuccio sware many terrible oathes, to observe her directions in every part, and having drawne forth his Sword, grasping it naked in his hand, and setting worse lookes on the businesse, then ever nature gave him, because he had spent so much labour in vaine; he failed not in a jot of the Ladies injunction. Beltramo having commanded his horse to safe custody, and meeting Lambertuccio discending downe the staires, so armed, swearing, and most extreamely storming, wondring extraordinarily at his threatning words, made offer to imbrace him, and understand the reason of his distemper. Lambertuccio repulsing him rudely, and setting foote in the stirrup, mounted on his Gelding, and spake nothing else but this. I sweare by the fairest of all my fortunes, although I misse of thee heere: yet I will be sure to find thee some where else, and so he gallopped mainely away.

When Beltramo was come up into his wives Chamber, hee found her cast downe upon her Couch, weeping, full of feare, and greatly discomforted; wherefore he said unto her, What is hee that Signior Lambertuccio is so extreamely offended withall, and threatneth in such implacable manner? The Lady arising from her Couch, and going neere to the Bed, because Lionello might the better heare her; returned her Husband this answere. Husband (quoth she) never was I so dreadfully affrighted till now; for, a young Gentleman, of whence, or what he is, I know not, came running into our Castle for rescue, being pursued by Signior Lambertuccio, with a weapon ready drawne in his hand. Ascending up our stayres, by what fortune, I know not, he found my Chamber doore standing open, finding me also working on my Sampler, and in wonderfull feare and trembling.

Good Madame (quoth hee) for Gods sake helpe to save my life, or else I shall be slaine heere in your Chamber. Hearing his pittious cry, and compassionating his desperate case; I arose from my worke, and in my demaunding of whence, and what he was, that durst presume so boldly into my bed-chamber: presently came up Signior Lambertuccio also, in the same uncivill sorte, as before I tolde you, swaggering and swearing; where is this traiterous villaine? Heereupon, I stept (somewhat stoutly) to my Chamber doore, and as hee offered to enter, with a womans courage I resisted him, which made him so much enraged against mee, that when hee saw mee to debarre his entrance; after many terrible and vile oathes and vowes, hee ranne downe the stayres againe, in such like manner as you chaunced to meete him.

Now trust mee deare wife (said Beltramo) you behaved your selfe very well and worthily: for, it would have beene a most notorious scandall to us, if a man should bee slaine in your bed-chamber: and Signior Lambertuccio carryed himselfe most dishonestly, to pursue any man so outragiously, having taken my Castle as his Sanctuary. But alas wife, what is become of the poore affrighted Gentleman? Introth Sir (quoth she) I know not, but (somewhere or other) heereabout hee is hidden. Where art you honest friend? said plaine meaning Beltramo; Come forth and feare not, for thine enemy is gone.

Lionello, who had heard all the forepassed discourse, which shee had delivered to her Husband Beltramo, came creeping forth amazedly (as one now very fearefully affrighted indeede) from under the further side of the bedde, and Beltramo saide to him, What a quarrell was this, between thee and furious Lambertuccio? Not any at all Sir, replyed Lionello, to my knowledge, which verily perswadeth me; that either he is not well in his wits, or else he mistaketh me for some other; because, so soone as he saw me on the way, somewhat neere to this your Castle, he drew forth his Sword, and swearing an horrible oath, said. Traitor thou art a dead man. Upon these rough words, I stayed not to question the occasion of mine offending him: but fled from him so fast as possibly I could; but confesse my selfe (indeede) over-bold, by presuming into your Ladies bed chamber, which yet (equalled with her mercie) hath bin the onely meanes at this time, of saving my life.

She hath done like a good Lady, answered Beltramo, and I do verie much commend her for it. But, recollect thy dismayed spirits together, for I will see thee safely secured hence, afterward, looke to thy selfe so well as thou canst. Dinner being immediately made ready, and they having merrily feasted together: he bestowed a good Gelding on Lionello, and rode along with him to Florence, where he left him quietly in his owne lodging. The selfe-same Evening (according as Isabella had given enstruction) Lionello conferred with Lambertuccio: and such an agreement passed betweene them, that though some rough speeches were noised abroad, to set the better colour on the businesse; yet al matters were so cleanly carried, that Beltramo never knew this queint deceitfull policy of his Wife.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

WHEREBY IS DECLARED, THAT SUCH AS KEEPE MANY HONEST SEEMING SERVANTS, MAY SOMETIME FINDE A KNAVE AMONG THEM, AND ONE THAT PROVES TO BE OVER-SAWCY WITH HIS MASTER.

Lodovico *discovered to his Mistresse Madame Beatrix, how amorously he was affected to her. She cunningly sent Egano her Husband into his garden, in all respects disguised like her selfe, while (friendly) Lodovico conferred with her in the meane while. Afterward, Lodovico pretending a lascivious allurement of his Mistresse, thereby to wrong his honest Master, insted of her, beateth Egano soundly in the Garden.*

This so sodaine dexterity of wit in Isabella, related in verie modest manner by Madame Pampinea, was not onely admired by all the company; but likewise passed with as generall approbation. But yet Madam Philomena (whom the King had commanded next to succeede) peremptorily sayde.

Worthy Ladies, if I am not deceived; I intend to tell you another Tale presently; as much to be commended as the last.

You are to understand then, that it is no long while since, when there dwelt in Paris a Florentine Gentleman, who falling into decay of his estate, by over-bountifull expences; undertooke the degree of a Merchant, and thrived so well by his trading, that he grew to great wealth, having one onely sonne by his wife, named Lodovico. This Sonne, partaking somewhat in his Fathers former height of minde, and no way inclineable to deale in Merchandize, had no meaning to be a Shopman, and therefore accompanied the Gentlemen of France, in sundry services for the King; among whom, by his singular good carriage and qualites, he happened to be not meanly esteemed. While thus he continued in the Court, it chanced, that certaine Knights, returning from Jerusalem, having there visited the holy Sepulcher, and comming into company where Lodovico was: much familiar discourse passed amongst them, concerning the faire women of France, England, and other parts of the world where they had bin, and what delicate beauties they had seene.

One in the company constantly avouched, that of all the Women by them so generally observed, there was not any comparable to the Wife of Egano de Galluzzi, dwelling in Bologna, and her name Madam Beatrix, reputed to be the onely faire woman of the world. Many of the rest maintained as much, having bin at Bologna, and likewise seene her. Lodovico hearing the woman to be so highly commended, and never (as yet) feeling any thought of amorous inclination; became sodainely toucht with an earnest desire of seeing her, and his minde could entertaine no other matter, but onely of travailing thither to see her, yea, and to continue there, if occasion so served. The reason for his journey urged to his Father, was to visit Jerusalem, and the holy Sepulcher, which with much difficulty, at length he obtained his leave.

Being on his journey towards Bologna, by the name of Anichino, and not of Lodovico, and being there arrived; upon the day following, and having understood the place of her abiding: it was his good happe, to see the Lady at her Window; she appearing in his eye farre more faire, then all reports had made her to be. Heereupon, his affection became so enflamed to her, as he vowed, never to depart from Bologna, untill he had obtained her love. And devising by what meanes he might effect his hopes, he grew perswaded (setting all other attempts aside) that if he could be entertained into her Husbands service, and undergo some businesse in the house, time might tutor him to obtaine his desire. Having given his attendants sufficient allowance, to spare his company, and take no knowledge of him, selling his Horses also, and other notices which might discover him: he grew into acquaintance with the Hoste of the house where he lay, revealing an earnest desire in himselfe, to serve som Lord or worthy Gentleman, if any were willing to give him entertainment.

Now beleeve me Sir (answered the Hoste) you seeme worthy to have a good service indeede, and I know a Noble Gentleman of this Cittie, who is named Egano: he will (without all question) accept your offer, for hee keepeth many men of verie good deserving, and you shall have my furtherance therein so much as may be. As he promised, so he performed, and taking Anichino with him unto Egano: so farre he prevailed by his friendly protestations, and good opinion of the young Gentleman; that Anichino was (without more ado) accepted into Eganoes service, then which, nothing could be more pleasing to him. Now had he the benefit of dayly beholding his hearts Mistresse, and so acceptable proved his service to Egano, that he grew very farre in love with him: not undertaking any affayres whatsoever, without the advice and direction of Anichino, so that he reposed his most especiall trust in him, as a man altogether governed by him.

It fortuned upon a day, that Egano being ridden to flye his Hawke at the River, and Anichino remaining behinde at home, Madame Beatrix, who (as yet) had taken no notice of Anichinoes love to her (albeit her selfe, observing his faire carriage and commendable qualities, was highly pleased to have so seeming a servant) called him to play at the Chesse with her: and Anichino, coveting nothing more then to content her, carried himselfe so dexteriously in the game, that he permitted hir still to win, which was no little joy to her. When all the Gentlewomen, and other friends there present, as spectators to behold their play, had taken their farewell, and were departed, leaving them all alone, yet gaming still: Anichino breathing forth an intire sigh, Madame Beatrix looking merrily on him, said. Tell me Anichino, art not thou angrie, to see me win? It should appeare so by that solemne sigh. No truly Madame, answered Anichino, a matter of farre greater moment, then losse of infinite games at the Chesse, was the occasion why I sighed. I pray thee (replyed the Lady) by the love thou bearest me, as being my Servant (if any love at all remain in thee towards me) give me a reason for that harty sigh.

When he heard himselfe so severely conjured, by the love he bare to her, and loved none else in the world beside: he gave a farre more hart-sicke sigh, then before. Then his Lady and Mistresse entreated him seriously, to let her know the cause of those two deepe sighes: whereto Anichino thus replyed. Madam, if I should tell you, I stand greatly in feare of offending you: and when I have told you, I doubt your discovery thereof to some other. Beleeve me Anichino (quoth she) therein thou neither canst, or shalt offend me. Moreover, assure thy selfe, that I will never disclose it to any other, except I may do it with thy consent. Madame (saide hee) seeing you have protested such a solemne promise to mee, I will reveale no meane secret unto you.

So, with teares standing in his eyes, he told her what he was; where he heard the first report of her singular perfections, and instantly becam enamored of her, as the maine motive of his entring into her service. Then, most humbly he entreated her, that if it might agree with her good liking, she would be pleased to commisserate his case, and grace him with her private favours. Or, if shee might not be so mercifull to him; that yet she would vouchsafe, to let him live in the lowly condition as he did, and thinke it a thankefull duty in him, onely to love her. O singular sweetnesse, naturally living in faire feminine blood! How justly art thou worthy of praise in the like occasions? Thou couldst never be wonne by sighes and teares; but hearty imprecations have alwayes prevailed with thee, making thee apt and easie to amorous desires. If I had praises answerable to thy great and glorious deservings, my voice should never faint, nor my pen waxe weary, in the due and obsequious performance of them.

Madam Beatrix, well observing Anichino when he spake, and giving credit to his so solemne protestations; they were so powerfull in prevailing with her, that her senses (in the same manner) were enchanted; and sighes flew as violently from her, as before he had vented them: which stormy tempest being a little over-blowne, thus she spake. Anichino, my hearts deere affected Friend, live in hope, for I tell thee truly, never could gifts, promises, nor any Courtings used to me by Lords, Knights, Gentlemen, or other (although I have bin solicited by many) winne the lest grace or favour at my hand, no, nor move me to any affection. But thou, in a minute of time (compared with their long and tedious suing) hast expressed such a soveraigne potency in thy sweet words, that thou hast made me more thine, then mine owne: and beleeve it unfeinedly, I hold thee to be worthy of my love. Wherefore, with this kisse I freely give it thee, and make thee a further promise, that before this night shall be fully past, thou shalt in better manner perceive it. Adventure into my Chamber about the houre of midnight, I will leave the doore open: thou knowest on which side of the bed I use to rest, come thither and feare not: if I sleep, the least gentle touch of thy hand will wake me, and then thou shalt see how much I love thee. So, with a kinde kisse or two, the bargaine was concluded, she licensing his departure for that time, and he staying in hope of his hearts happinesse, till when, he thought every houre a yeare.

In the meane while; Egano returned home from Hawking, and so soone as he had supt (being very weary) he went to bed, and his Ladie likewise with him, leaving her Chamber doore open, according as she had promised. At the houre appointed, Anichino came, finding the doore but easily put too, which (being entred) softly he closed againe, in the same manner as he found it. Going to the beds side where the Lady lay, and gently touching her brest with his hand, he found her to be awake, and perceiving he was come according unto promise, shee caught his hand fast with hers, and held him very strongly. Then, turning (as she could) towards Egano, she made such meanes, as hee awaked, whereupon she spake unto him as followeth.

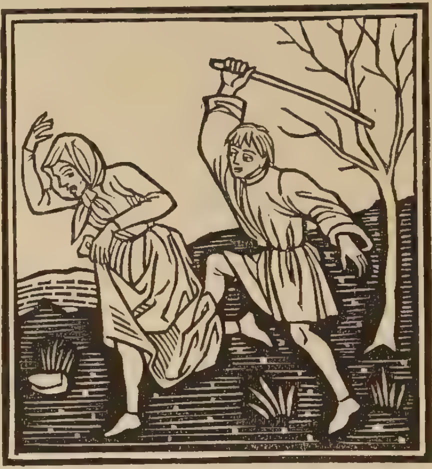
Sir, yesternight I would have had a fewe speeches with you: but, in regard of your wearinesse and early going to bed, I could not have any opportunity. Now, this time and place being most convenient, I desire to bee resolved by you: Among all the men retained into your service; which of them do you thinke to be the best, most loyall, and worthiest to enjoy your love? Egano answered thus: Wife, why should you move such a question to me? Do not you know, that I never had any servant heeretofore, or ever shall have heereafter, in whom I reposed the like trust as I have done, and do in Anichino? But to what end is this motion of yours? I will tell you Sir (quoth she) and then be Judge your self, whether I have reason to move this question, or no. Mine opinion every way equalled yours, concerning Anichino, and that he was more just and faithfull to you, then any could be amongest all the rest: But Husband, like as where the water runneth stillest, the Foord is deepest, even so, his smooth lookes have beguiled both you and me. For, no longer agoe, then this verie day, no sooner were you ridden foorth on Hauking, but he (belike purposely) tarrying at home, watching such a leysure as best fitted his intent: was not ashamed to solicite mee, both to abuse your bed, and mine owne spotlesse honor.

Moreover, he prosecuted his impious purpose with such alluring perswasions: that being a weake woman, and not willing to endure over many Amorous proofes (onely to acquaint you with his most sawcie immodestie, and to revenge your selfe uppon him as best you may; your selfe beeing best able to pronounce him guiltie) I made him promise, to meete him in our Garden, presently after midde-night, and to finde mee sitting under the Pine-Tree; never meaning (as I am vertuous) to be there. But, that you may know the deceite and falshoode of your Servant, I would have you to put on my Night-gowne, my head Attire, and Chinne-cloath, and sitting but a short while there underneath the Pine-Tree: such is his insatiate desire, as he will not faile to come, and then you may proceede, as you finde occasion.

When Egano heard these Words, sodainely hee started out of Bed, saying. Doe I foster such a Snake in mine owne bosome? Gramercie Wife for this politicke promise of thine, and beleeve mee, I meane to follow it effectually. So, on he put his Ladies

Night-gown, her formall head Attire and Chin-cloth, going presently downe into the Garden, to expect Anichinoes comming to the Pine-Tree. But before the matter grew to this issue, let me demand of you faire Ladies, in what a lamentable condition (as you may imagine) was poore Anichino; to bee so strongly detained by her, heare all his amorous suite discovered, and likely to draw very heavy afflictions on him? Undoubtedly, he looked for immediate apprehension by Egano, imprisonment and publike punishment for his so malapert presumption: and had it proved so, she had much renowned her selfe, and dealt with him but as he had justlie deserved.

But frailtie in our feminine sex is too much prevalent, and makes us wander from vertuous courses, when we are wel onward in the way to them. Madam Beatrix, whatsoever passed betweene her and Anichino, I know not, but, either to continue this new begunne league for further time, or, to be revenged on her husbands simplicity, in over-rashlie giving credit to so smooth a ly; this was her advise to him. Anichino, quoth she, Take a good Cudgell in thy hand, then go into the Garden so farre as the Pine; and there, as if formerly thou hadst solicited mee unto this secret meeting, only but by way of approving my honestie: in my name, revile thy master so bitterly as thou canst, bestowing manie sound blowes on him with thy cudgel; yet urge the shame stil (as it were) to mee, and never leave him, til thou hast beaten him out of the garden, to teach him keepe his bed another time. Such an apt Scholler as Anichino was in this kind, needs no tutoring, but a word is enough to a ready Wit. To the Garden goes he, with a good willow cudgell in his hand, and comming neere to the Pine-tree, there he found Egano disguised like to his Lady, who arising from the place where he sate, went with chearefull gesture to welcome him; but Anichino (in rough and stearne manner) thus spake unto him. Wicked, shamelesse, and most immodest Woman, Art thou come, according to thine unchaste and lascivious promise? Couldest thou so easily credite, (though I tempted thee, to trie the vertue of thy continencie) I would offer such a damnable wrong to my worthy Master, that so deerely loves me, and reposeth his especiall confidence in me? Thou art much deceived in me, and shalt finde, that I hate to be false to him.



So lifting up the Cudgell, he gave him therewith halfe a score good bastinadoes, laying them on soundly, both on his armes and shoulders: and Egano feeling the smart of them, durst not speake one Worde, but fled away from him so fast as hee could, Anichino still following, and multiplying many other injurious speeches against him, with the Epithites of Strumpet, lustfull and insatiate Woman. Go thou lewde beast (quoth he) most unworthy the title of a Lady, or to be Wife unto so good a natured man, as my Mayster is, to whom I will reveale thy most ungracious incivility to Morrow, that he may punish thee a little better then I have done.

Egano being thus well beaten for his Garden walke, got within the doore, and so went up to his Chamber againe: his Lady there demanding of him, whether Anichino came according to his promise, or no? Come?

quoth Egano, Yes Wife, he came, but deerely to my cost: for hee verily taking me for thee, hath beaten me most extreamly, calling me an hundred Whores and Strumpets, reputing thee to bee the wickedst Woman living. In good sadnesse Beatrix, I wondred not a little at him, that he would give thee any such vile speeches, with intent to wrong mee in mine honour. Questionlesse, because hee saw thee to be joviall spirited, gracious and affable towardes all men; therefore hee intended to make triall of thine honest carriage. Well Sir (sayde shee) twas happy that hee tempted mee with words, and let you taste the proofe of them by deeds: and let him thinke, that I brooke those words as distastably, as you do or can, his ill deeds. But seeing he is so just, faithfull, and loyall to you, you may love him the better, and respect him as you finde occasion.

Whereto Egano thus replyed. Now trust me wife, thou hast said very well: And drawing hence the argument of his setled perswasion; that he had the chastest Woman living to his wife, and so just a Servant, as could not be fellowed: there never was any further discoverie of this Garden-night accident. Perhaps, Madame Beatrix and Anichino might subtilly smile thereat in secret, in regard that they knew more then any other else beside did. But, as for honest meaning Egano, hee never had so much as the verie least mistrust of ill dealing, either in his Lady, or Anichino; whom hee loved and esteemed farre more respectively uppon this proofe of his honestie towards him, then hee would or could possibly have done, without a triall so playne and pregnant.

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THE EIGHT NOVELL

WHEREBY APPEARETH, THAT AN HUSBAND OUGHT TO BE VERY WELL ADVISED, WHEN HE MEANETH TO DISCOVER ANY WRONG OFFERED HIS WIFE; EXCEPT HEE HIM-SELFE DO RASHLY RUN INTO ALL THE SHAME AND REPROACH.

ARRIGUCCIO *Berlinghieri, became immeasurably jelous of his Wife Simonida, who fastened a thred about her great toe, for to serve as a signall, when her amorous friend should come to visite her. Arriguccio findeth the fallacie, and while he pursueth the amorous friend, shee causeth her Maide to lye in her bed against his returne: whom he beateth extreamly, cutting away the lockes of her haire (thinking he had doone all this violence to his wife Simonida:) and afterward fetcheth her Mother and Brethren, to shame her before them, and so be rid of her. But they finding all his speeches to be utterly false; and reputing him to bee a drunken jealous foole; all the blame and disgrace falleth on himselfe.*

IT seemed to the whole assembly, that Madam Beatrix, dealte somewhat strangely, in the manner of beguiling her husband; and affirmed also, that Anichino had great cause of fear, when she held him so strongly by her beds side, and related all his amorous temptation. But when the King perceyved, that Madame Philomena sate silent, he turned to Madam Neiphila, willing her to supply the next place; who modestly smiling, thus began.

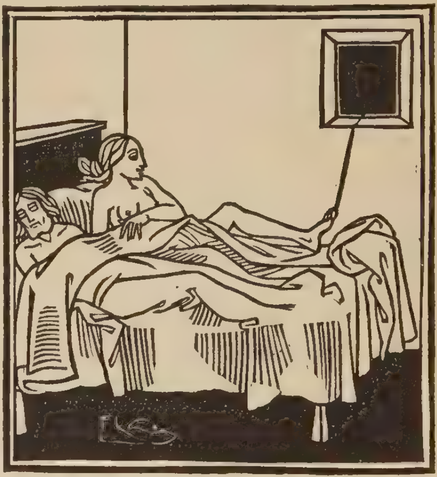
Faire Ladies, it were an heavy burthen imposed on me, and a matter much surmounting my capacity, if I should vainely imagine, to content you with so pleasing a Novell, as those have already done, by you so singularly reported: neverthelesse, I must discharge my dutie, and take my fortune as it fals, albeit I hope to finde you mercifull.

You are to know then, that sometime there lived in our Citie, a very welthy Merchant, named Arriguccio Berlinghieri, who (as many Merchants have done) fondly imagined, to make himselfe a Gentleman by marriage. Which that he might the more assuredly do, he took to wife a Gentlewoman, one much above his degree or element, she being named Simonida. Now, in regard that he delighted (as it is the usuall life of a Merchant) to be often abroad, and little at home, whereby shee had small benefit of his company; shee grew very forward in affection with a young Gentleman, called Signior Roberto, who had solicited hir by many amorous meanes, and (at length) prevailed to win her favor. Which favour being once obtained; affection gaddes so farre beyond al discretion, and makes Lovers so heedelesse of their private conversations: that either they are taken tardy in their folly, or else subjected to scandalous suspition.

It came to passe, that Arriguccio, either by rumour, or some other more sensible apprehension, had received such intelligence concerning his Wife Simonida, as he grew into extraordinarie jealousie of her, refraining travaile abroad, as formerly he was wont to doe, and ceasing from his verie ordinary affayres, addicting all his care and endeavour, onely to be watchfull of his Wife; so that he never durst sleepe, untill she were by him in the bed, which was no meane mollestation to her, being thus curbd from her familiar meetings with Roberto. Nevertheless, having a long while consulted with her wittes, to find some apte meanes for conversing with him, being thereto also very earnestlie still solicited by him; you shall heare what course she undertooke.

Her Chamber being on the streete side, and somewhat juttying over it, she observed the disposition of her Husband, that every night it was long before he fell asleepe: but beeing once falne into it, no noyse whatsoever, could easily wake him. This his solemne and sound sleeping, emboldned her so farre, as to meete with Roberto at the streete doore, which (while her Husband slept) softly she would open to him, and therein private converse with him.

But, because shee would know the certaine houre of his comming, without the least suspition of any: she hung a thred forth of her Chamber Window, descending downe, within the compasse of Robertoes reach in the street, and the other end thereof, guided from the Window to the bed, being conveyed under the cloathes, and shee being in bed, she fastned it about her left great Toe, wherewith Roberto was sufficiently acquainted, and thus enstructed withall; that at his comming, he should plucke the thred, and if her husband was in his dead sleep, she would let go the thred, and come downe to him: but if he slept not, she would hold it strongly, and then his tarrying would prove but in vaine, there could be no meeting that night.



This devise was highly pleasing both to Roberto and Simonida, being the intelligencer of their often meeting, and many times also advising the contrary. But in the end, as the quaintest cunning may faile at one time or other; so it fortuned one night, that Simonida being in a sound sleepe, and Arriguccio waking, because his drowsie houre was not yet come: as he extendeth forth his legge in the bed, he found the thred, which feeling in his hand, and perceiving it was tyed to his wives great toe; it prooved apt tinder to kindle further Jealousie, and now hee suspected some treachery indeede, and so much the rather because the thred guided (under the cloathes) from the bed to the window, and there hanging downe into the streete, as a warning to some further businesse.

Now was Arriguccio so furiously enflamed, that hee must needes bee further resolved in this apparant doubt: and because therein hee would not be deceived, softly he cut the thred from his wives toe, and made it fast about his owne; to trye what successe would ensue thereon. It was not long before Roberto came, and according as hee used to doe, hee pluckt the thred, which Arriguccio felt, but because hee had not tyed it fast, and Roberto pulling it over-hardly, it fell downe from the window into his hand, which he understood as his lesson, to attend her comming, and so hee did. Arriguccio stealing softly out of bed from his wife, and taking his Sword under his arme, went downe to the doore, to see who it was, with full intent of further revenge. Now, albeit he was a Merchant, yet he wanted not courage, and boldnesse of spirit, and opening the doore without any noyse, onely as his wife was wont to doe: Roberto, there waiting his entrance, perceived by the doores unfashionable opening, that it was not Simonida, but her Husband, whereupon he betooke himselfe to flight, and Arriguccio fiercely followed him. At the length, Roberto perceiving that flight avayled him not, because his enemy still pursued him: being armed also with a Sword, as Arriguccio was; he returned backe upon him, the one offering to offend, as the other stood upon his defence, and so in the darke they fought together.

Simonida awaking, even when her Husband went foorth of the Chamber, and finding the thred to be cut from her toe; conjectured immediately, that her subtle cunning was discovered, and supposing her Husband in pursuite of Roberto, presently she arose; and, considering what was likely to ensue thereon, called her Chamber-maide (who was not ignorant of the businesse) and by perswasions prevailed so with her, that she lay downe in her place in the bed, upon solemne protestations and liberall promises, not to make her selfe knowne, but to suffer all patiently, either blowes, or other ill usage of her Husband, which shee would recompence in such bountifull sort, as she should have no occasion to complaine. So, putting out the watchlight, which every night burned in the Chamber, she departed thence, and sate downe in a close corner of the house, to see what would be the end of all this stirre, after her Husbands comming home.

The fight (as you have formerly heard) continuing betweene Roberto and Arriguccio, the neighbours hearing of the clashing of their Swords in the streets; arose out of their beds, and reproved them in very harsh manner. In which respect Arriguccio, fearing to be knowne, and ignorant also what his adversary was (no harme being as yet done on either side) permitted him to depart; and extreamely full of anger, returned backe againe to his house. Being come up into his bed-chamber, thus he began; Where is this lewde and wicked woman? what? hast thou put out the light, because I should not finde thee? that shall not avayle thee, for I can well enough finde a drab in the darke. So, groping on to the beds side, and thinking hee had taken holde on his wife, he grasped the Chamber-maide, so beating her with his fists, and spurning her with his feet, that al her face was bloody and bruised. Next, with his knife he cut off a great deal of her haire, giving her the most villanous speeches as could be devised: swearing, that he would make her a shame to all the world.

You need make no doubt, but the poore maide wept exceedingly, as she had good occasion to doe: and albeit many times she desired mercy, and that hee would not bee so cruell to her: yet notwithstanding, her voyce was so broken with crying, and his impacience so extreame, that rage hindered all power of distinguishing, or knowing his wives tongue from a strangers. Having thus madly beaten her, and cut the lockes off from her head, thus he spake to her. Wicked woman, and no wife of mine, be sure I have not done with thee yet; for, although I meane not now to beate thee any longer: I will goe to thy brethren, and they shall understand thy dishonest behaviour. Then will I bring them home with me, and they perceiving how much thou hast abused both their honour and thine owne; let them deale with thee as they finde occasion, for thou art no more a companion for me. No sooner had he uttered these angry words, but hee went forth of the Chamber, bolting it fast on the outward side, as meaning to keepe her safely inclosed, and out of the house he went alone by himselfe.

Simonida, who had heard all this tempestuous conflict, perceiving that her Husband had lockt the streete doore after him, and was gone whether he pleased: unbolted the Chamber doore, lighted a waxe candle, and went in to see her poore maide, whom she found to be most pittifully misused. She comforted her as well as she could, brought her into her owne lodging Chamber, where washing her face and hurts in very soveraigne waters, and rewarding her liberally with Arriguccioes owne Gold; she held her selfe to be sufficiently satisfyed. So, leaving the maide in her lodging, and returning again to her owne Chamber: she made up the bed in such former manner, as if no body had lodged therein that night. Then hanging up her Lampe fresh fild with oyle, and clearly lighted, she deckt her selfe in so decent sort, as if she had bin in no bed all that night.

Then taking sowing worke in her hand, either shirts or bands of her Husbands; hanging the Lampe by her, and sitting downe at the stayres head, she fell to worke in very serious manner, as if shee had undertaken some imposed taske.

On the other side, Arriguccio had travelled so farre from his house, till he came at last to the dwelling of Simonidaes brethren: where hee knockt so soundly, that he was quickely heard, and (almost as speedily) let in. Simonidaes brethren, and her mother also, hearing of Arriguccioes comming thither so late. Rose from their beds, and each of them having a Waxe Candle lighted, came presently to him, to understand the cause of this his so unseasonable visitation. Arriguccio, beginning at the originall of the matter, the thred found tyed about his wives great toe, the fight and houshold conflict after following: related every circumstance to them. And for the better proofe of his words, he shewed them the thred it selfe, the lockes supposed of his wives haire, and adding withall; that they might now dispose of Simonida as themselves pleased, because she should remaine no longer in his house.

The brethren to Simonida were exceedingly offended at this relation, in regard they beleeved it for truth, and in this fury, commanded Torches to be lighted, preparing to part thence with Arriguccio home to his house, for the more sharpe reprehension of their Sister. Which when their mother saw, she followed them weeping, first entreating one, and then the other, not to be over rash in crediting such a slander, but rather to consider the truth thereof advisedly: because the Husband might be angry with his Wife upon some other occasion, and having outraged her, made this the meanes in excuse of himselfe. Moreover she said, that she could not chuse but wonder greatly, how this matter should thus come to passe: because she had good knowledge of her daughter, during the whole course of her education, faultlesse and blamelesse in every degree; with many other good words of her beside, as proceeding from naturall affection of a mother.

Being come to the house of Arriguccio, entring in, and ascending up the stayres: they heard Simonida sweetly singing at her working; but pausing, upon hearing their rude trampling, shee demaunded, who was there. One of the angry brethren presently answered: Lewde woman as thou art, thou shalt know soone enough who is heere: Our blessed Lady be with us (quoth Simonida) and sweet Saint Frances helpe to defend me, who dare use such unseemely speeches? Starting up and meeting them on the staire head: Kinde brethren, (said she) is it you? What, and my loving mother too? For sweet Saint Charities sake, what may be the reason of your comming hither in this manner. Shee being set downe againe to her worke, so neatly apparelled, without any signe of outrage offered her, her face unblemished, her haire comely ordered, and differing wholly from the former speeches of her Husband: the Brethren marvelled thereat not a little; and asswaging somewhat the impetuous torrent of their rage, began to demaund in coole blood, (as it were) from what ground her Husbands complaints proceeded, and threatning her roughly, if she would not confesse the truth intirely to them.

Ave Maria (quoth Simonida, crossing her selfe) Alas deare Brethren, I know not what you say, or meane, nor wherein my Husband should bee offended, or make any complaint at all of me. Arriguccio hearing this, looked on her like a man that had lost his Senses: for well he remembred, how many cruell blowes he had given her on the face, beside scratches of his nailes, and spurnes of his feet, as also the cutting of her haire, the least shew of all which misusage, was not now to be seene. Her brethren likewise briefly told her, the whole effect of her Husbands speeches, shewing her the thred, and in what cruell manner he sware hee did beate her. Simonida, turning then to her Husband, and seeming as confounded with amazement, said. How is this Husband? what doe I heare? would you have me supposed (to your owne shame and disgrace) to be a bad woman, and your selfe a cruell curst man, when (on either side) there is no such matter? When were you this night heere in the house with mee? Or when should you beate mee, and I not feele nor know it? Beleeve me (sweete heart) all these are meerely miracles to me.

Now was Arriguccio ten times more mad in his minde, then before, saying. Divell, and no woman, did wee not this night goe both together to bed? Did not I cut this thred from thy great toe, tyed it to mine, and found the craftie compact betweene thee and thy Minnion? Did not I follow and fight with him in the streets? Came I not backe againe, and beate thee as a Strumpet should be? And are not these the locks of haire, which I my selfe did cut from thy head?

Alas Sir (quoth she) where have you been? doe you know what you say? you did not lodge in this house this night, neither did I see you all the whole day and night, till now.

But leaving this, and come to the matter now in question, because I have no other testimony then mine owne words. You say, that you did beate me, and cut those lockes of haire from my head. Alas Sir, why should you slander your selfe? In all your life time you did never strike me. And to approve the truth of my speeches, doe you your selfe, and all else heere present, looke on me advisedly, if any signe of blow or beating is to be seene on me. Nor were it an easie matter for you to doe either to smite, or so much as lay your hand (in anger) on me, it would cost dearer then you thinke for. And whereas you say, that you did cut those lockes of haire from my head; it is more then either I know, or felt, nor are they in colour like to mine: but, because my Mother and brethren shall be my witnesses therein, and whether you did it without my knowledge; you shall all see, if they be cut, or no. So, taking off her head attyre, she displayed her hayre over her shoulders, which had suffered no violence, neither seemed to bee so much as uncivilly or rudely handled.

When the mother and brethren saw this, they began to murmure against Arriguccio, saying. What thinke you of this Sir? you tell us of strange matters which you have done, and all proving false, we wonder how you can make good the rest. Arriguccio looked wilde, and confusedly, striving still to maintaine his accusation: but seeing every thing to bee flatly against him, he durst not attempt to speake one word. Simonida tooke advantage of this distraction in him, and turning to her brethren, saide. I see now the marke whereat he aymeth, to make me doe what I never meante: Namely, that I should acquaint you with his vile qualities, and what a wretched life I leade with him, which seeing hee will needes have me to reveale; beare with me if I doe it upon compulsion.

Mother and Brethren, I am verily perswaded, that those accidents which he disclosed to you, hath doubtlesse (in the same manner) happened to him, and you shall heare how. Very true it is, that this seeming honest man, to whom (in a lucklesse houre) you married me, stileth himselfe by the name of a Merchant, coveting to be so accounted and credited, as holy in outward appearance, as a Religious Monke, and as demure in lookes, as the modestest Maide: like a notorious common drunkard, is a Taverne hunter, where making his luxurius matches, one while with one Whore, then againe with another; hee causeth mee every night to sit tarrying for him, even in the same sort as you found me: sometimes till midnight, and otherwhiles till broad day light in the morning.

And questionlesse, being in his wounted drunken humour, hee hath lyen with one of his sweet Consorts, about whose toe he found the thred, and finding her as false to him, as he hath alwayes been to me: Did not onely beat her, but also cut the haire from her head. And having not yet recovered his sences, is verily perswaded, and cannot be altered from it; but that hee performed all this villany to me. And if you doe but advisedly observe his countenance, he appeareth yet to be more then halfe drunke.

But whatsoever he hath said concerning me, I make no account at all thereof, because he spake it in his drunkennesse, and as freely as I forgive him, even so (good Mother and kinde Brethren,) let mee entreate you to do the like.

When the Mother had heard these words, and confidently beleeved her Daughter: she began to torment her selfe with anger, saying. By the faith of my body Daughter, this unkindnesse is not [to] be endured, but rather let the dogge be hanged, that his qualities may be knowne, he being utterly unworthy, to have so good a woman to his wife, as thou art. What could he have done more, if he had taken thee in the open streete, and in company of some wanton Gallants? In an unfortunate houre wast thou married to him, base jealous Coxecombe as he is, and it is quite against sense, or reason, that thou shouldest be subject to his fooleries. What was hee, but a Merchant of Eale-skinnes or Orenges, bred in some paltry countrey village; taken from Hogge-rubbing; clothed in Sheepes-Sattin, with Clownish Startops, Leather stockings, and Caddies garters: His whole habite not worth three shillings: And yet he must have a faire Gentlewoman to his Wife, of honest fame, riches and reputation; when, comparing his pedegree with hers, hee is farre unfit to wipe her shooes.

Oh my deare sonnes, I would you had followed my counsell, and permitted her to mate in the honourable family of Count

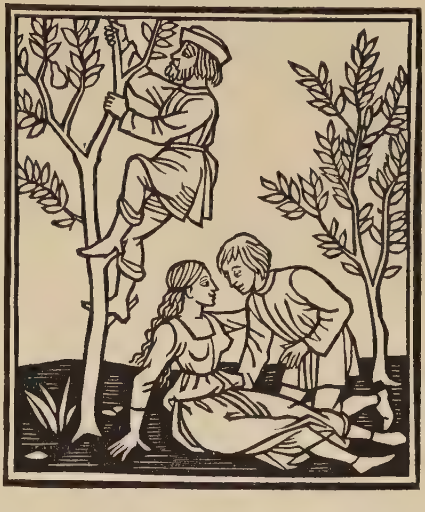
Guido, which was much mooved, and seriously pursued. But you would needs bestow her on this goodly Jewell; who, although shee is one of the choysest beauties in Florence, chaste, honest and truely vertuous: Is not ashamed at midnight, to proclaime her for a common whore, as if we had no better knowledge of her. But by the blessed mother of Saint John, if you would be ruled by mine advise; our law should make him dearely smart for it.

Alas my sonnes, did I not tell you at home in our owne house, that his words were no way likely to prove true? Have not your eyes observed his unmannerly behaviour to your Sister? If I were as you are, hearing what he hath said, and noting his drunken carriage beside; I should never give over, as long as he had any life left in him. And were I a man, as I am a woman, none other then my selfe should revenge her wrongs, making him a publike spectacle to all drabbing drunkards.

When the brethren had heard and observed all these occurrences; in most bitter manner they railed on Arriguccio, bestowing some good bastinadoes on him beside, concluding thus with him in the end. Quoth one of them, Wee will pardon this shamefull abusing of our Sister, because thou art a notorious drunkard: but looke to it (on perill of thy life) that we have no more such newes hereafter; for, beleeve it unfainedly, if any such impudent rumours happen to our eares, or so much as a flying fame thereof; thou shalt surely be paide for both faults together.

So home againe went they, and Arriguccio stood like one that had neither life or motion, not knowing (whether what he had done) was true, or no, or if he dreamed all this while, and so (without uttering any word) he left his Wife, and went quietly to bed. Thus by her wisdome, she did not onely prevent an imminent perill: but also made a free and open passage, to further contentment with her amourous friend, yet dreadlesse of any distaste or suspition in her Husband.

THE NINTH NOVELL



WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT GREAT LORDS MAY SOMETIME BE DECEIVED BY THEIR WIVES, AS WELL AS MEN OF MEANER CONDITION.

Lydia, *a Lady of great beauty, birth, and honor, being Wife to Nicostratus, Governour of Argos, falling in love with a Gentleman, named Pyrrhus; was requested by him (as a true testimony of her unfeigned affection) to performe three severall actions of her selfe. She did accomplish them all, and imbraced and kissed Pyrrhus in the presence of Nicostratus; by perswading him, that whatsoever he saw, was meerely false.*

The Novell delivered, by Madame Neiphila, seemed so pleasing to all the Ladies; as they could not refraine from hearty laughter, beside much liberality of speech. Albeit the King did oftentimes urge silence, and commanded Pamphilus to follow next. So, when attention was admitted, Pamphilus began in this order. I am of opinion, faire Ladies, that there is not any matter, how uneasie or doubtfull soever it may seeme to be; but the man or woman that affecteth fervently, dare boldly attempt, and effectually accomplish. And this perswasion of mine, although it hath beene sufficiently approved, by many of our passed Novels: Yet notwithstanding, I shall make it much apparent to you, by a present discourse of mine owne. Wherein I have occasion to speake of a Lady, to whom Fortune was more favourable, then either reason or judgement, could give direction. In which regard, I would not advise any of you, to entertaine so high an imagination of minde, as to tracke her footsteps of whom I am now to speake: because Fortune containeth not alwayes one and the same disposition, neither can all mens eyes be blinded after one manner. And so proceed we to our Tale.

In Argos, a most ancient Citie of Achaya, much more renowned by her precedent Kings, then wealth, or any other great matter of worth: there lived as Lieutenant or Governour thereof, a Noble Lord, named Nicostratus, on whom (albeit hee was well stept into yeares) Fortune bestowed in marriage a great Lady, no lesse bold of spirit, then choisely beautifull. Nicostratus, abounding in treasure and wealthy possessions, kept a goodly traine of Servants, Horses, Houndes, Hawkes, and what else not, as having an extraordinary felicity in all kinds of game, as singular exercises to maintaine his health.

Among his other Servants and Followers, there was a yong Gentleman, gracefull of person, excellent in speech, and every way as active as no man could be more: his name Pyrrhus, highly affected of Nicostratus, and more intimately trusted then all the rest. Such seemed the perfections of this Pyrrhus, that Lydia (for so was the Lady named) began to affect him very earnestly, and in such sort, as day or night shee could take no rest, but devised all meanes to compasse her harts desire. Now, whether he observed this inclination of her towards him, or else would take no notice thereof, it could not be discerned by any outward apprehension: which moved the more impatiency in her, and drove her hopes to dispairing passions. Wherein to finde some comfort and ease, she called an ancient Gentlewoman of her Chamber, in whom shee reposed especiall confidence, and thus she spake to her.

Lesca, The good turnes and favours thou hast received from me, should make thee faithfull and obedient to me: and therefore set a locke uppon thy lippes, for revealing to any one whatsoever, such matters as now I shall impart to thee; except it be to him that I command thee. Thou perceivest Lesca, how youthfull I am, apt to all sprightly recreations, rich, and abounding in all that a woman can wish to have, in regard of Fortunes common and ordinary favours: yet I have one especiall cause of complaint: namely, the inequality of my Mariage, my Husband being over-ancient for me; in which regard, my youth finds it selfe too highly wronged, being defeated of those duties and delights, which Women (farre inferiour to me) are continuallie cloyed withall, and I am utterly deprived of. I am subject to the same desires they are, and deserve to taste the benefit of them, in as ample manner, as they do or can.

Hitherto I have lived with the losse of time, which yet (in some measure) may be releeved and recompenced: For, though Fortune were mine enemy in Mariage, by such a disproportion of our conditions: yet she may befriend in another nature, and kindely redeeme the injury done me. Wherefore Lesca, to be as compleate in this case, as I am in all the rest beside; I have resolved upon a private Friend, and one more worthy then any other, Namely, my Servant Pyrrhus, whose youth carieth some correspondency with mine; and so constantly have I setled my love to him, as I am not well, but when I thinke on him, or see him: and (indeede) shall dye, except the sooner I may enjoy him. And therefore, if my life and well-fare be respected by thee, let him understand the integrity of mine affection, by such good means as thou findest it most expedient to be done: entreating him from me, that I may have some conference with him, when he shall thereto be solicited by me.

The Chamber-Gentlewoman Lesca, willingly undertooke the Ladies Embassie; and so soone as opportunity did favor her: having withdrawne Pyrrhus into an apt and commodious place, shee delivered the Message to him, in the best manner she could devise. Which Pyrrhus hearing, did not a little wonder thereat, never having noted any such matter; and therefore sodainly conceyved, that the Lady did this onely to try him; whereupon, somewhat roundly and roughly, hee returned this answere. Lesca, I am not so simple, as to credite any such Message to be sent from my Lady, and therefore be better advised of thy words. But admit that it should come from her, yet I cannot be perswaded, that her soule consented to such harsh Language, far differing from a forme so full of beuty. And yet admit againe, that her hart and tongue herein were relatives: My Lord and Master hath so farre honoured mee, and so much beyond the least part of merite in mee: as I will rather dye, then any way offer to disgrace him: And therefore I charge thee, never more to move mee in this matter.

Lesca, not a jot danted at his stearne words, presently she saide. Pyrrhus, Both in this and all other Messages my Lady shall command me, I wil speake to thee whensoever shee pleaseth, receive what discontent thou canst thereby; or make presumption of what doubts thou maist devise. But as I found thee a senselesse fellow, dull, and not shaped to any understanding, so I leave thee: And in that anger parted from him, carrying backe the same answer to her Lady. She no sooner heard it, but instantly shee wished her selfe to be dead; and within some few dayes after, she conferred againe with her Chamber-woman, saying. Lesca, thou knowest well enough, that the Oxe falleth not at the first blow of the Axe, neither is the victory won, upon a silly and shallow adventure: Wherefore, I thinke it convenient, that once more thou shouldst make another tryall of him, who (in prejudice to me) standeth so strictly on his loyalty, and choosing such an houre as seemeth most commodious, soundly possesse him with my tormenting passions. Bestirre thy Wittes, and tippe thy tongue with a Womans eloquence, to effect what I so earnestly desire: because, by languishing in this lovesicke affliction, it will bee the danger of my death, and some severe detriment to him, to be the occasion of so great a losse.

Lesca, comforted her Lady, so much as lay in her power to doe, and having sought for Pyrrhus, whom she found at good leysure; and, in a pleasing humor, thus she beganne. Pyrrhus, some few dayes since I tolde thee, in what extreame Agonies thy Lady and mine was, onely in regarde of her love to thee: and now againe I come once more, to give thee further assurance thereof: Wherefore, beleeve it unfeignedly, that if thy obstinacie continue still, in like manner as the other day it did, expect very shortly to heare the tydings of her death.

It is my part therefore, to entreat thee, to comfort her long languishing desires: but if thou persist in thy harsh opinion, in stead of reputing thee a wise and fortunate yong man, I shall confesse thee to bee an ignoraunt Asse. What a glorie is it to thee, to be affected of so faire and worthy a Lady, beyond all men else whatsoever? Next to this, tell me, how highly maist thou confesse thy selfe beholding to Fortune, if thou but duly consider, how shee hath elected thee as sole soveraigne of her hopes, which is a crowne of honour to thy youth and a sufficient refuge against all wants and necessities? Where is any to thy knowledge like thy selfe, that can make such advantage of his time, as thou maist do, if thou wert wise? Where canst thou find any one to go beyond thee in Armes, Horses, sumptuous garments, and Gold, as will be heaped on thee, if Lydia may be the Lady of thy love? Open then thine understanding to my words, returne into thine owne soule, and bee wise for thy selfe.

Remember (Pyrrhus) that Fortune presents her selfe but once before any one, with cheerefull lookes, and her lappe wide open of richest favours, where if choice be not quickely made, before she folde it up, and turn her backe; let no complaint afterward be made of her, if the Fellow that had so faire an offer, proove to be miserable, wretched, and a Begger, only thorow his owne negligence. Beside, what else hath formerly bin saide, there is now no such neede of loyaltie in servants to their Ladies, as should be among deare Friends and Kindred: but servants ought rather (as best they may) be such to their Masters, as they are to them. Doest thou imagine, that if thou hadst a faire Wife, Mother, Daughter, or Sister, pleasing in the eye of our Nicostratus; he would stand on such nice tearmes of duty or Loyaltie, as now thou doest to his Ladie? Thou wert a verie foole to rest so perswaded. Assure thy selfe, that if entreaties and faire meanes might not prevaile, force, and compulsion (whatsoever ensued thereon) woulde winne the masterie. Let us then use them, and the commodities unto them belonging, as they would us and ours. Use the benefit of thy Fortune, and beware of abusing her favour. She yet smiles on thee; but take heede least she turne her backe, it will then be over-late to repent thy folly. And if my Ladie die through thy disdaine, be assured, that thou canst not escape with life, beside open shame and disgrace for ever.

Pyrrhus, who had often considered on Lescaes first message, concluded with himselfe; that if any more she moved the same matter: hee would returne her another kinde of answere, wholly yeelding to content his Lady; provided, that he might remaine assured, concerning the intyre truth of the motion, and that it was not urged onely to trie him, wherefore, thus he replyed. Lesca, do not imagine mee so ignorant, as not to know the certaintie of all thy former allegations, confessing them as freely as thou doest, or canst. But yet let mee tell thee withall, that I knowe my Lord to be wise and judicious, and having committed all his affaires to my care and trust: never blame mee to misdoubt, least my Ladie (by his counsell and advice) make thee the messenger of this motion, therby to call my Fidelitie in question.

To cleare which doubt, and for my further assurance of her well meanning toward me; if she wil undertake the performance of three such things as I must needes require in this case: I am afterward her owne, in any service she can command me. The first of them, is; that in the presence of my Lord and Master, she kill his faire Faulcon, which so dearly hee affecteth. The second, to send me a locke or tuft of his beard, being puld away with her owne hand. The third and last, with the same hand also, to pluck out one of his best and soundest teeth, and send it mee as her loves true token. When I finde all these three effectually performed, I am wholly hers, and not before.

These three strict impositions, seemed to Lesca, and her Ladie likewise, almost beyond the compasse of all possibility. Nevertheles Love, being a powerfull Oratour in perswading, as also adventurous even on the most difficult dangers; gave her courage to undertake them all: sending Lesca backe againe to him, with full assurance, of these more then Herculean labours. Moreover, her selfe did intend to adde a fourth taske, in regard of his strong opinion concerning the great Wisedome of his Lord and Maister. After she had effected all the other three, she would not permit him to kisse her, but before his Lords face: which yet should be accomplished in such sort, as Nicostratus himselfe should not beleeve it, although apparantly he saw it. Well, (quoth Pyrrhus) when all these wonders are performed, assure my Ladie. that I am truelie hers.

Within a short while after, Nicostratus made a solemne Feastival (according as yearely he used to doe) in honour of his birth day, inviting many Lords and Ladies thereto. On which rejoycing day, so soone as dinner was ended, and the Tables withdrawne: Lydia came into the great Hall, where the Feast was solemnly kept; very rich and costly apparrelled; and there, in presence of Pyrrhus, and the whole assemblie, going to the Perch whereon the Faulcone sate, wherein her Husband tooke no little delight, and having untyed her, as if shee meant to beare her on her Fist: tooke her by the Jesses, and beating her against the wal, killed her. Nicostratus beholding this, called out aloud unto her, saying. Alas Madame! What have you done? She making him no answere, but turning to the Lords and Ladies, which had dined there, spake in this manner.

Ill should I take revenge on a King, that had offended me, if I had not so much heart, as to wreake my spleene on a paltry Hawke. Understand then, worthy Lords and Ladies, that this Faulcone hath long time robbed me of those delights, which men (in meere equitie) ought to have with their wives: because continually, so soone as breake of day hath appeared, my Husband, starting out of bed, makes him selfe readie, presently to Horsse, and with this Faulcon on his Fist, rides abroad to his recreation in the Fields. And I, in such forsaken sort as you see, am left all alone in my bed, discontented and despised: often vowing to my selfe, to bee thus revenged as now I am, being with-held from it by no other occasion, but onely want of a fit and apt time, to do it in the presence of such persons, as might bee just Judges of my wrongs, and as I conceive you all to be.

The Lords and Ladies hearing these words, and beleeving this deed of hers to be done no otherwise, but out of her entire affection to Nicostratus, according as her speeches sounded: compassionately turning towards him (who was exceedingly displeased) and all smiling, said. Now in good sadnesse Sir; Madame Lydia hath done well, in acting her just revenge upon the Hawke, that bereft her of her Husbands kinde companie; then which nothing is more precious to a loving wife, and a hell it is to live without it. And Lydia, being sodainly withdrawne into her chamber; with much other friendly and familiar talke, they converted the anger of Nicostratus into mirth and smiling.

Pyrrhus, who had diligently observed the whole cariage of this businesse, saide to himselfe. My Ladie hath begun well, and proceeding on with no worse successe, will (no doubt) bring her love to an happy conclusion. As for the Lady her selfe, she having thus kild the Hawke, it was no long while after, but being in the Chamber with her husband, and they conversing familiarly together; she began to jest with him, and hee in the like manner with her, tickling and toying each the other, till at the length she played with his beard, and now she found occasion aptly serving, to effect the second taske imposed by Pyrrhus. So, taking fast hold on a small tuft of his beard, she gave a sodaine snatch, and plucked it away quite from his chin. Whereat Nicostratus beeing angerly moved, she (to appease his distaste) pleasantly thus spake. How now my Lord? Why do you looke so frowningly? What? Are you angry for a few loose haires of your beard? How then should I take it, when you plucke mee by the haire of my head, and yet I am not a jot discontented, because I know you do it but in jesting manner? These friendly speeches cut off all further contention, and she kepte charily the tuft of her Husbands beard, which (the verie selfe-same day) shee sent to Pyrrhus her hearts chosen friend.

But now concerning the third matter to be adventured, it drove her to a much more serious consideration, then those two which shee had already so well and exactly performed. Notwithstanding, like a Ladie of unconquerable spirit, and (in whom) Love enlarged his power more and more: she sodainly conceited, what course was best to bee kept in this case, forming her attempt in this manner. Upon Nicostratus wayted two young Gentlemen, as Pages of his Chamber, whose Fathers had given them to his service, to learne the manners of honourable Courtship, and those qualities necessarily required in Gentlemen. One of them, when Nicostratus sate downe to dinner or supper, stood in Office of his Carver, delivering him all the meats whereon he fed. The other (as Taster) attended on his Cup, and he dranke no other drinke, but what hee brought him, and they both were highly pleasing unto him.

On a day, Lydia called these two youths aside; and, among some other speeches, which served but as an induction to her intended policy; she perswaded them, that their mouths yeelded an unsavoury and il-pleasing smell, whereof their Lord seemed to take dislike. Wherefore she advised them, that at such times as they attended on him in their severall places: they should (so much as possibly they could) withdraw their heads aside from him, because their breath might not be noyous unto him. But withall, to have an especiall care, of not disclosing to any one, what she had told them; because (out of meere love) she had acquainted them therewith: which very constantly they beleeved, and followed the same direction as she had advised, being loath to displease, where service bound them to obey. Choosing a time fitting for her purpose, when Nicostratus was in private conference with her, thus she began. Sir, you observe not the behaviour of your two Pages, when they wait on you at the Table? Yes but I do wife (quoth he) how squemishly they turn their heads aside from me, and it hath often bin in my minde, to understand a reason why they do so.

Seating her selfe by him, as if shee had some weighty matter to tell him; she proceeded in this manner. Alas my Lord, you shall not need to question them, because I can sufficiently resolve you therein: which (neverthelesse) I have long concealed, because I would not be offensive to you. But in regard, it is now manifestly apparant, that others have tasted, what (I immagined) none but my selfe did, I will no longer hide it from you. Assuredly Sir, there is a most strange and unwonted ill-savour, continually issuing from your mouth, smelling most noysomely, and I wonder what should be the occasion. In former times, I never felt any such foule breathing to come from you: and you, who do daily converse with so many worthy persons, should seeke meanes to be rid of so great an annoyance. You say verie true wife (answered Nicostratus) and I protest to you on my Credite, I feele no such ill smell, neither know what should cause it, except I have som corrupted tooth in my mouth. Perhaps Sir (quoth she) it may be so, and yet you feele not the savour which others do, yea, very offensively.

So, walking with her to a Window, he opened wide his mouth, the which nicely shee surveyed on either side, and, turning her head from him, as seeming unable to endure the savour: starting, and shrieking out alowd, she said. Santa Maria! What a sight is this? Alas my good Lord, How could you abide this, and for so long a while? Heere is a tooth on this side, which (so farre as I can perceive) is not onely hollow and corrupted: but also wholly putrified and rotten, and if it continue still in your head, beleeve it for a truth, that it will infect and spoile all the rest neere it. I would therefore counsell you, to let it be pluckt out, before it breede your further danger. I like your counsell well Lydia, replyed Nicostratus, and presently intend to follow it; Let therefore my Barber be sent for, and, without any longer delay, he shall plucke it forth instantly.

How sir? (quoth she,) your Barber? Uppon mine Honour, there shall come no Barber heere. Why Sir, it is such a rotten Tooth, and standeth so fairely for my hand: that, without helpe or advice of any Barber, let mee alone for plucking it forth, without putting you to any paine at all. Moreover, let me tell you Sir, those Tooth-drawers are so rude and cruell, in performing such Offices, as my heart cannot endure, that you should come within compasse of their currish courtesie, neither shall you Sir, if you will be ruled by me. If I should faile in the manner of their facilitie, yet love and duty hath enstructed me, to forbeare your least paining, which no unmannerly Barber will do.

Having thus spoken, and he well contented with her kinde offer, the instruments were brought, which are used in such occasions, all being commanded forth of the Chamber, but onely Lesca, who evermore kept still in her company. So, locking fast the doore, and Nicostratus being seated, as she thought fittest for her purpose, she put the Tanacles into his mouth, catching fast hold on one of his soundest teeth: which, notwithstanding his loud crying, Lesca held him so strongly, that forth she pluckt it, and hid it, having another tooth readie made hot and bloody, very much corrupted and rotten, which she helde in the Tanacles, and shewed to him, who was well-neere halfe dead with anguish. See Sir (quoth she) was this Tooth to be suffered in your head, and to yeeld so foule a smell as it did? He verily beleeving what she said, albeit hee had endured extreame paine, and still complained on her harsh and violent pulling it out: rejoyced yet, that he was now ridde of it, and she comforting him on the one side, and the anguish asswaging him on the other, he departed forth of the Chamber.

In the mean while, by Lesca she sent the sound tooth to Pyrrhus, who (wondering not a little at her so many strange attempts, which hee urged so much the rather, as thinking their performance impossible, and in meere loyall duty to his Lord) seeing them all three to be notably effected; he made no further doubt of her intire love towardes him, but sent her assurance likewise, of his readinesse and serviceable diligence, whensoever she would command him.

Now, after the passage of all these adventures, hardly to bee undertaken by any other Woman: yet she held them insufficient for his security, in the grounded perswasion of her love to him, except shee performed another of her owne, and according as shee had boldly promised. Houres do now seeme dayes, and dayes multiplicitie of yeeres, till the kisse may be given, and receyved in the presence of Nicostratus, yet hee himselfe to avouch the contrary.

Madam Lydia (upon a pretended sicknesse) keepeth her chamber, and as women can hardly be exceeded in dissimulation: so, shee wanted no wit, to seeme exquisitely cunning, in all the outwarde apparances of sicknesse. One day after dinner, shee being visited by Nicostratus, and none attending on him but Pyrrhus onely: she earnestly entreated, that as a mitigation, to some inward afflictions which she felt, they would helpe to guide her into the Garden.

Most gladly was her motion graunted, and Nicostratus gently taking her by one arme, and Pyrrhus by the other, so they conducted her into the Garden, seating her in a faire floury Grasse-plot, with her backe leaning to a Peare-tree. Having sitten there an indifferent while, and Pyrrhus, being formerly enstructed, in the directions which she had given him, thus shee spake, some-what faintly. Pyrrhus, I have a kinde of longing desire upon a sodaine, to taste of these Peares: Wherefore, climbe up into the Tree, and cast me downe one or two; which instantly hee did. Being aloft in the Tree, and throwing downe some of the best and ripest Peares; at length (according to his premeditated Lesson) looking downe, he said.

Forbeare my Lord, Do you not see, in how weake and feeble condition my Ladie is, being shaken with so violent a sicknesse? And you Madam, how kinde and loving soever you are to my Lord, Are you so little carefull of your health, being but now come forth of your sicke Chamber, to be ruffled and tumbled in such rough manner? Though such dalliances are not amisse in you both; being fitter for the private Chamber, then an open garden, and in the presence of a servant: yet time and place should alwaies bee respectively considered, for the avoiding of ill example, and better testimonie of your owne Wisedomes, which ever should be like your selves. But if so soone, and even in the heate of a yet turbulent sicknesse, your equall love can admit these kisses and embraces: your private Lodginges were much more convenient, where no Servants eye can see such Wantonnesse, nor you be reproved of indiscretion, for being too publique in your Familiaritie.

Madame Lydia, sodainely starting, and turning unto her Husband, sayde. What doth Pyrrhus prate? Is he well in his wittes? Or is he franticke? No Madame, replyed Pyrrhus, I am not franticke. Are you so fond as to thinke that I do not see your folly? Nicostratus wondering at his Words, presently answered. Now trust me Pyrrhus, I think thou dreamest. No my Lord, replyed Pyrrhus, I dreame not a jot, neither do you, or my Ladie: but if this Tree could affoord the like kindnesse to me, as you do to her, there would not a Peare bee left upon it. How now Pyrrhus? (quoth Lydia) this language goeth beyond our understanding, it seemeth thou knowest not what thou saist. Beleeve me husband, if I were as well as ever I have bin, I would climb this tree, to see those idle wonders which hee talketh of: for, while he continueth thus above, it appeareth, hee can finde no other prattle, albeit he taketh his marke amisse.

Heereupon, he commanded Pyrrhus to come downe, and being on the ground: Now Pyrrhus (quoth he) tell me what thou saydst. Pyrrhus, pretending an alteration into much amazement, straungely looking about him, saide; I know not verie well (my Lord) what answere I should make you, fearing least my sight hath bin abused by error: for when I was aloft in that Tree, it seemed manifestly to me: that you embraced my Lady (though somewhat rudely, in regard of her perillous sicknesse, yet lovingly) and as youthfully as in your yonger daies, with infinite kisses, and wanton dalliances, such as (indeede) deserved a far more private place in my poore opinion. But in my descending downe, mee thought you gave over that amorous familiaritie, and I found you seated as I left you. Now trust mee Pyrrhus, answered Nicostratus, Thy tongue and wit have very strangely wandred, both from reason and all reall apprehension: because we never stirred from hence, since thou didst climbe up into the Tree, neither mooved otherwise, then as now thou seest us. Alas my Lord (saide Pyrrhus) I humbly crave pardon for my presumption, in reprooving you for medling with your owne: which shal make me hereafter better advised, in any thing what soever I heare or see.

Mervaile and amazement, encreased in Nicostratus far greater then before, hearing him to avouch still so constantly what he had seene, no contradiction being able to alter him, which made him rashly sweare and say. I will see my selfe, whether this Peare-tree bee enchanted, or no: and such wonders to be seene when a man is up in it, as thou wouldst have us to beleeve. And being mounted up so hy, that they were safe from his sodaine comming on them, Lydia had soone forgotten her sicknes, and the promised kisse cost her above twenty more, beside verie kinde and hearty embraces, as lovingly respected and entertained by Pyrrhus. Which Nicostratus beholding aloft in the tree; cryed out to her, saying. Wicked woman, What doest thou meane? And thou villain Pyrrhus, Darst thou abuse thy Lord, who hath reposed so much trust in thee? So, descending in haste downe againe, yet crying so to them still: Lydia replyed, Alas my Lord, Why do you raile and rave in such sort? So, hee found her seated as before, and Pyrrhus waiting with dutiful reverence, even as when he climbed up the Tree: but yet he thought his sight not deceyved, for all their demure and formall behaviour, which made him walke up and downe, extreamely fuming and fretting unto himselfe, and which in some milder manner to qualifie, Pyrrhus spake thus to him.

I deny not (my good Lord) but freely confesse, that even as your selfe, so I, being above in the Tree, had my sight most falsely deluded: which is so apparantly confirmed by you, and in the same sort, as there needeth no doubt of both our beguiling; in one and the same suspitious nature. In which case to be the more assuredly resolved, nothing can be questioned, but whether your beleefe do so farre misleade you, as to thinke, that my Ladie (who hath alwayes bene most wise, loyall, and vertuous,) would so shamefullie wrong you: yea, and to performe it before your face, wherein I dare gadge my life to the contrary. Concerning my selfe, it is not fit for mee, to argue or contest in mine owne commendation: you that have ever knowne the sincerity of my service, are best able to speake in my behalfe: and rather wold I be drawne in peeces with foure wilde horses, then bee such an injurious slave to my Lord and Master.

Now then, it can be no otherwise, but we must needs rest certainely perswaded, that the guile and offence of this false appearance, was occasioned by thee onely. For all the world could not make me otherwise beleeve, but that I saw you kisse and most kindely imbrace my Lady: if your owne eyes had not credited the like behaviour in me to her, of which sinne, I never conceived so much as a thought. The Lady (on the other side) seeming to be very angerly incensed, starting faintly up on her feet, yet supporting her selfe by the tree, said. It appeareth Sir, that you have entertained a goodly opinion of me, as, if I were so lewde and lasciviously disposed, or addicted to the very least desire of wantonnesse: that I would bee so forgetfull of mine owne honour, as to adventure it in your sight, and with a servant of my house? Oh Sir, such women as are so familiarly affected, need learne no wit of men in amourous matters; their private Chambers shall be better trusted, then an open blabing and tell-tale Garden.

Nicostratus, who verily beleeved what they had both said, and that neither of them would adventure such familiarity before his face: would talke no more of the matter, but rather studyed of the rarity of such a miracle, not seene, but in the height of the tree, and changing againe up on the descent. But Lydia, containing still her collourable kinde of impatience, and angerly frowning upon Nicostratus, stearnely saide. If I may have my will, this villanous and deceiving tree, shall never more shame me, or any other woman: and therefore Pyrrhus, runne for an Axe, and by felling it to the ground, in an instant, revenge both thy wrong and mine. Doest not thou serve a worthy Lord? And have not I a wise Husband, who, without any consideration, will suffer the eye of his understanding to be so dazeled, with a foolish imagination beyond all possibility? For, although his eyes did apprehend such a folly, and it seemed to be a truth indeed: yet, in the depth of setled judgement, all the world should not perswade him, that it was so.

Pyrrhus had quickely brought the Axe, and hewing downe the tree, so soone as the Lady saw it fall; turning her selfe to Nicostratus, she said. Now that I have seene mine honour and honesties enemy laid along; mine anger is past, and Husband, I freely pardon you: intreating you heartily henceforward, not to presume or imagine, that my love eyther is, or can bee altred from you.

Thus the mocked and derided Nicostratus, returned in againe with his Lady and Pyrrhus; where perhaps (although the Peare-tree was cut downe) they could find as cunning meanes to over-reach him.

THE TENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN SUCH MEN ARE COVERTLY REPREHENDED, WHO MAKE NO CARE OR CONSCIENCE AT ALL OF THOSE THINGS THAT SHOULD PRESERVE THEM FROM SINNE.

Two Citizens of Siena, the one named Tingoccio Mini, and the other Meucio di Tura, affected both one woman, called Monna Mita, to whom the one of them was a Gossip. The Gossip dyed, and appeared afterward to his companion, according as he had formerly promised him to doe, and tolde him what strange wonders he had seene in the other world.

Now there remained none but the King himselfe, last of all to recount his Novell; who, after hee heard the Ladies complaints indifferently pacified, for the rash felling downe of such a precious Peare-tree; thus he began. Faire Ladies, it is a case more then manifest, that every King, who will be accounted just and upright: should first of all, and rather then any other, observe those Lawes which he himselfe hath made; otherwise he ought to be reputed as a servant, worthy of punishment, and no King. Into which fault and reprehension, I your King, shall well neere be constrained to fall; for yesterday I enacted a Law, upon the forme of our discoursing, with full intent, that this day I would not use any part of my priviledge; but being subject (as you all are) to the same Law, I should speake of that argument, which already you have done.

Wherein, you have not onely performed more then I could wish, upon a subject so sutable to my minde: but in every Novell, such variety of excellent matter, such singular illustrations, and delicate eloquence hath flowne from you all; as I am utterly unable to invent any thing (notwithstanding the most curious search of my braine) apt or fit for the purpose, to paragon the meanest of them already related. And therefore seeing I must needs sinne in the Law established by my selfe; I tender my submission, as worthy of punishment, or what amends else you please to enjoyne mee. Now, as returned to my wonted priviledge, I say, that the Novell recounted by Madame Eliza, of the Fryar Godfather and his Gossip Agnesia, as also the sottishnesse of the Senese her Husband, hath wrought in me (worthy Ladies) to such effect; as, forbearing to speake any more of these wily prancks, which witty wives exercise on their simple Husbands; I am to tell you a pretty short Tale; which, though there is matter enough in it, not worthy the crediting, yet partly it will bee pleasing to heare.

Sometime there lived in Sienna two popular men; the one being named Tingoccio Mini, and the other Meucio de Tura; Men simple, and of no understanding, both of them dwelling in Porta Salaia. These two men lived in such familiar conversation together, and expressed such cordiall affection each to other, as they seldome walked asunder; but (as honest men use to doe) frequented Churches and Sermons, oftentimes hearing, both what miseries and beatitudes were in the world to come, according to the merits of their soules that were departed out of this life, and found their equall repaiment in the other. The manifold repetition of these matters, made them very earnestly desirous to know, by what meanes they might have tydings from thence, for their further confirmation. And finding all their endeavours utterly frustrated, they made a solemne vow and promise (each to other under oath) that hee which first dyed of them two, should returne backe againe (so soone as possibly he could) to the other remaining alive, and tell him such tydings as hee desired to heare.

After the promise was thus faithfully made, and they still keeping company, as they were wont to doe: It fortuned, that Tingoccio became Gossip to one, named Ambrosio Anselmino, dwelling in Campo-reggio, who by his wife, called Monna Mita, had a sweet and lovely Sonne. Tingoccio often resorting thither, and consorted with his companion Meucio; the she-Gossip, being a woman worthy the loving, faire and comely of her person: Tingoccio, notwithstanding the Gossipship betweene them, had more then a moneths minde to his Godchilds Mother. Meucio also fell sicke of the same disease, because shee seemed pleasing in his eye, and Tingoccio gave her no meane commendations; yet, carefully they concealed their love to themselves, but not for one and the same occasion. Because Tingoccio kept it closely from Meucio, lest he should hold it disgracefull in him, to beare amourous affection to his Gossip, and thought it unfitting to bee knowne. But Meucio had no such meaning, for hee knew well enough that Tingoccio loved her, and therefore conceived in his minde, that if he discovered any such matter to him: He will (quoth he) be jealous of me, and being her Gossip (which admitteth his conference with her when himselfe pleaseth;) he may easily make her to distaste me, and therefore I must rest contented as I am.

Their love continuing on still in this kinde, Tingoccio prooved so fortunate in the businesse, that having better meanes then his companion, and more prevayling courses, when, where, and how to Court his Mistresse, which seemed to forward him effectually. All which Meucio plainely perceived, and though it was tedious and wearisome to him, yet hoping to finde some successe at length: he would not take notice of any thing, as fearing to infringe the amity betweene him and Tingoccio, and so his hope to be quite supplanted. Thus the one triumphing in his loves happinesse, and the other hoping for his felicity to come; a lingering sickenesse seazed on Tingoccio, which brought him to so low a condition, as at the length he dyed.

About some three or foure nights after, Meucio being fast asleepe in his bed, the ghoste of Tingoccio appeared to him, and called so loude, that Meucio awaking, demanded who called him? I am thy friend Tingoccio, replied the ghoste, who according to my former promise made, am come again in vision to thee, to tell thee tidings out of the nether world. Meucio was a while somewhat amazed: but, recollecting his more manly spirits together, boldly he said. My brother and friend, thou art heartily welcome: but I thought thou hadst beene utterly lost. Those things (quoth Tingoccio) are lost, which cannot be recovered againe, and if I were lost, how could I then be heere with thee? Alas Tingoccio, replyed Meucio, my meaning is not so: but I would be resolved, whether thou art among the damned soules, in the painefull fire of hell torments, or no? No (quoth Tingoccio) I am not sent thither, but for divers sinnes by mee committed I am to suffer very great and grievous paines. Then Meucio demaunded particularly, the punishments inflicted there, for the severall sinnes committed heere: Wherein Tingoccio fully resolved him. And upon further question, what hee would have to be done for him here, made answere, That Meucio should cause Masses, Prayers and Almes-deeds to be performed for him, which (he said) were very helpefull to the soules abiding there, and Meucio promised to see them done.

As the ghost was offering to depart, Meucio remembred Tingoccioes Gossip Monna Mita, and raysing himselfe higher upon his pillowe, said. My memorie informeth me friend Tingoccio, of your kinde Gossip Monna Mita, with whom (when you remained in this life) I knew you to be very familiar: let me intreat you then to tell me, what punishment is inflicted on you there, for that wanton sinne committed heere? Oh Brother Meucio, answered Tingoccio, so soone as my soule was landed there, one came immediately to me, who seemed to know all mine offences readily by heart, and forthwith commanded, that I should depart thence into a certaine place, where I must weepe for my sinnes in very grievous paines. There I found more of my companions, condemned to the same punishment as I was, and being among them, I called to minde some wanton dalliances, which had passed betweene my Gossip and me, and expecting therefore farre greater afflictions, then as yet I felt (although I was in a huge fire, and exceedingly hot) yet with conceite of feare, I quaked and trembled wondrously.

One of my other Consorts being by me, and perceiving in what an extreame agony I was; presently said unto me. My friend, what hast thou done more, then any of us here condemned with thee, that thou tremblest and quakest, being in so hot a fire? Oh my friend (quoth I) I am in feare of a greater judgement then this, for a grievous offence by mee heretofore committed while I lived. Then hee demaunded of mee what offence it was, whereto thus I answered. It was my chance in the other world, to be Godfather at a childs Christning, and afterward I grew so affectionate to the childs mother, as (indeed) I kissed her twice or thrise. My companyon laughing at me in mocking manner, replyed thus. Goe like an Asse as thou art, and be no more afraid hereafter, for here is no punishment inflicted, in any kinde whatsoever, for such offences of frailty committed, especially with Gossips, as I my selfe can witnesse.

Now day drew on, and the Cockes began to crow, a dreadfull hearing to walking spirits, when Tingoccio said to Meucio. Farewell my friendly companion, for I may tarry no longer with thee, and instantly hee vanished away. Meucio having heard this confession of his friend, and verily beleeving it for a truth, that no punishment was to be inflicted in the future world, for offences of frailty in this life, and chiefly with Gossips: began to condemne his owne folly, having bin a Gossip to many wives, yet modesty restrained him from such familiar offending. And therefore being sorry for this grosse ignorance, hee made a vowe to be wiser hereafter. And if Fryar Reynard had been acquainted with this kind of shrift (as doubtlesse he was, though his Gossip Agnesia knew it not) he needed no such Syllogismes, as he put in practise, when he converted her to his lustfull knavery, in the comparison of kinred by him moved, concerning her husband, the childe and himselfe. But, these are the best fruits of such Fryerly Confessions, to compasse the issue of their inordinate appetites; yet clouded with the cloake of Religion, which hath beene the overthrow of too many.

By this time the gentle blast of Zephirus began to blow, because the Sunne grew neere his setting, wherewith the King concluded his Novell, and none remaining more to be thus imployed: taking the Crowne from off his owne head, he placed it on Madame Laurettaes, saying, Madame, I Crowne you with your owne Crowne, as Queene of our Company. You shall henceforth command as Lady and Mistresse, in such occasions as shall be to your liking, and for the contentment of us all; With which words he set him downe. And Madame Lauretta being now created Queene, shee caused the Master of the houshold to bee called, to whom she gave command, that the Tables should be prepared in the pleasant vally, but at a more convenient houre, then formerly had beene, because they might (with better ease) returne backe to the Pallace. Then shee tooke order likewise, for all such other necessary matters, as should bee required in the time of her Regiment: and then turning her selfe to the whole Company, she began in this manner.

It was the Will of Dioneus yesternight, that our discourses for this day, should concerne the deceits of wives to their Husbands. And were it not to avoyde taxation, of a spleenitive desire to be revenged, like the dog being bitten, biteth againe: I could command our to morrows conference, to touch mens treacheries towards their wives. But because I am free from any such fiery humor, let it be your generall consideration, to speake of such queint beguylings, as have heretofore past, either of the woman to the man, the man to the woman, or of one man to another: and I am of opinion, that they will yeeld us no lesse delight, then those related (this day) have done. When she had thus spoken, she rose; granting them all liberty, to goe recreate themselves untill Supper time.

The Ladies being thus at their owne disposing, some of them bared their legges and feete, to wash them in the coole current. Others, not so minded, walked on the greene grasse, and under the goodly spreading trees. Dioneus and Madame Fiammetta, they sate singing together, the love-warre between Arcit and Palemon. And thus with diversity of disports, in choice delight and much contentment, all were imployed, till Supper drew neere. When the houre was come, and the Tables covered by the Ponds side: we need not question their dyet and dainties, infinite Birds sweetly singing about them, as no musicke in the world could be more pleasing; beside calme windes, fanning their faces from the neighbouring hilles (free from flyes, or the least annoyance) made a delicate addition to their pleasure.

No sooner were the Tables withdrawne, and all risen: but they fetcht a few turnings about the vally, because the Sunne was not (as yet) quite set. Then in the coole evening, according to the Queenes appointment: in a soft and gentle pace, they walked homeward: devising on a thousand occasions, as well those which the dayes discourses had yeelded, as others of their owne inventing beside. It was almost darke night, before they arrived at the Pallace; where, with variety of choice Wines, and abounding plenty of rare Banquetting, they out wore the little toile and wearinesse, which the long walke had charged them withall. Afterward, according to their wonted order, the Instruments being brought and played on, they fell to dancing about the faire Fountaine; Tindaro intruding (now and then) the sound of his Bagpipe, to make the musicke seeme more melodious. But in the end, the Queene commanded Madame Philomena to sing; whereupon the Instruments being tuned fit for the purpose, thus she began.

THE SONG

THE CHORUS SUNG BY THE WHOLE COMPANY

Wearisome is my life to me,
Because I cannot once againe returne;
Unto the place which made me first to mourne.

Nothing I know, yet feele a powerfull fire,
Burning within my brest,
Through deepe desire;
To be once more where first I felt unrest,
Which cannot be exprest.
O my sole good! O my best happinesse!
Why am I thus restrainde?
Is there no comfort in this wretchednesse?
Then let me live content, to be thus painde.
Wearisome is my life to me, etc.

I cannot tell what was that rare delight,
Which first enflamde my soule,
And gave command in spight,
That I should find no ease by day or night,
But still live in controule.
I see, I heare, and feele a kinde of blisse,
Yet find no forme at all:
Other in their desire, feele blessednesse,
But I have none, nor thinke I ever shall.
Wearisome is my life to me, etc.

Tell me, if I may hope in following dayes,
To have but one poore sight,
Of those bright Sunny rayes,
Dazeling my sence, did o'recome me quite,
Bequeath'd to wandring wayes.
If I be poasted off, and may not prove,
To have the smallest grace:
Or but to know, that this proceeds from love,
Why should I live despisde in every place?
Wearisome is my life to me, etc.

Me thinkes milde favour whispers in mine eare,
And bids me not despaire;
There will a time appeare
To quell and quite confound consuming care,
And joy surmount proud feare.
In hope that gracious time will come at length,
To cheare my long dismay:
My spirits reassume your former strength,
And never dread to see that joyfull day.
Wearisome is my life to me,
Because I cannot once againe returne;
Unto the place, which made me first to mourne.

This Song gave occasion to the whole Company, to imagine, that some new and pleasing apprehension of Love, constrained Madame Philomena to sing in this manner. And because (by the discourse thereof) it plainely appeared, that shee had felt more then shee saw, shee was so much the more happy, and the like was wished by all the rest. Wherefore, after the Song was ended; the Queene remembring, that the next day following was Friday, turning her selfe graciously to them all, thus she spake.

You know noble Ladies, and you likewise most noble Gentlemen, that to morrow is the day consecrated to the Passion of our blessed Lord and Saviour, which (if you have not forgotten it, as easily you cannot) we devoutly celebrated, Madame Neiphila being then Queene, ceasing from all our pleasant discoursing, as we did the like on the Saturday following, sanctifiing the sacred Sabboth, in due regard of it selfe. Wherefore, being desirous to imitate precedent good example, which in worthy manner shee began to us all: I hold it very decent and necessary, that we should abstaine to morrow, and the day ensuing, from recounting any of our pleasant Novels, reducing to our memories, what was done (as on those dayes) for the salvation of our soules. This holy and Religious motion made by the Queene, was commendably allowed by all the assembly, and therefore, humbly taking their leave of her, and an indifferent part of the night being already spent; severally they betooke themselves to their Chambers.

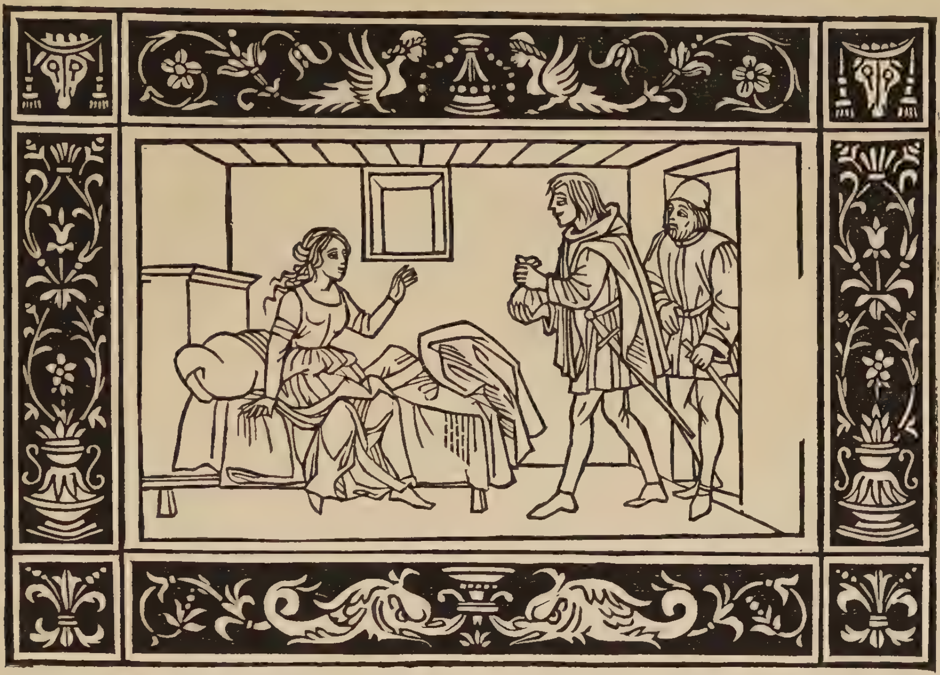
THE INDUCTION TO THE EIGHT DAY

WHEREON ALL THE DISCOURSES, PASSE UNDER THE RULE AND GOVERNMENT, OF THE HONOURABLE LADIE LAURETTA.

EARELY on the Sonday Morning, Aurora shewing her selfe bright and lovely; the Sunnes Golden beames beganne to appeare, on the toppes of the neere adjoyning Mountaines; so, that Hearbes, Plants, Trees, and all things else, were verie evidently to be discerned.

When midday, and the heate thereof was well over-past, so that the aire seemed mild and temperate: according as the Queene had commanded; they were all seated againe about the Fountaine, with intent to prosecute their former pastime. And then Madame Neiphila, by the charge imposed on her, as first speaker for this day, beganne as followeth.

THE EIGHT DAY, THE FIRST NOVELL



WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT SUCH WOMEN AS WILL MAKE SALE OF THEIR HONESTIE, ARE SOMETIMES OVER-REACHED IN THEIR PAYMENT, AND JUSTLY SERVED AS THEY SHOULD BE.

GULFARDO *made a match or wager, with the Wife of Gasparuolo, for the obtaining of her amorous favour, in regard of a summe of money first to be given her. The money hee borrowed of her Husband, and gave it in payment to her, as in case of discharging him from her Husbands debt. After his returne home from Geneway, hee told him in the presence of his wife, how he had payde the whole summe to her, with charge of delivering it to her Husband, which she confessed to be true, albeit greatly against her will.*

SEEING it is my fortune, Gracious Ladies, that I must give beginning to this dayes discoursing, by some such Novel which I thinke expedient; as duty bindeth me, I am therewith well contented. And because the deceits of Women to men, have beene at large and liberally related; I will tell you a subtile tricke of a man to a Woman. Not that I blame him for the deede, or thinke the deceyte not well fitted to the woman: but I speake it in a contrarie nature, as commending the man, and condemning the woman very justly, as also to shew, how men can as well beguile those crafty companions, which least beleeve any such cunning in them, as they that stand most on their artificiall skill.

Howbeit, to speake more properly, the matter by me to be reported, deserveth not the reproachfull title of deceite, but rather of a recompence duly returned: because women ought to be chaste and honest, and to preserve their honour as their lives, without yeelding to the contamination thereof, for any occasion whatsoever. And yet neverthelesse (in regard of our frailty) many times we proove not so constant as we should be: yet I am of opinion, that she which selleth her honestie for money, deserveth justly to be burned. Whereas on the contrary, she that falleth into the offence, onely through intire affection (the powerfull lawes of Love beeing above all resistance) in equity meriteth pardon, especially of a Judge not over-rigorous: as not long since wee heard from Philostratus, in revealing what hapned to Madam Phillippa de Prato, upon the dangerous Edict.

Understand then, my most worthy Auditors, that there lived sometime in Millaine an Almaigne Soldiour, named Gulfardo, of commendable carriage in his person, and very faithfull to such as he served, a matter not common among the Almaignes. And because he made just repayment, to every one which lent him monies; he grew to such especiall credit, and was so familiar with the very best Marchants; as (manie times) he could not be so ready to borrow, as they were willing alwaies to lend him. He thus continuing in the Cittie of Millaine, fastened his affection on a verie beautifull Gentlewoman, named Mistresse Ambrosia, Wife unto a rich Merchant, who was called Signior Gasparuolo Sagastraccio, who had good knowledge of him, and respectively used him. Loving this Gentlewoman with great discretion, without the least apprehension of her husband: he sent upon a day to entreate conference with her, for enjoying the fruition of her love, and she should find him ready to fulfill whatsoever she pleased to command him, as, at any time he would make good his promise.

The Gentlewoman, after divers of these private solicitings, resolutely answered, that she was as ready to fulfill the request of Gulfardo, provided, that two especiall considerations might ensue thereon. First, the faithfull concealing thereof from any person living. Next, because she knew him to be rich, and she had occasion to use two hundred Crowns, about businesse of important consequence: he should freely bestow so many on her, and (ever after) she was to be commanded by him. Gulfardo perceiving the covetousnesse of this woman, who (notwithstanding his doting affection) he thought to be intirely honest to her Husband: became so deepely offended at her vile answere, that his fervent love converted into as earnest loathing her; determining constantlie to deceive her, and to make her avaritious motion, the only means wherby to effect it.

He sent her word, that he was willing to performe her request, or any farre greater matter for her: in which respect, he onely desired for to know, when she would be pleased to have him come see her, and to receive the money of him? No creature hee acquainted with his setled purpose, but onely a deere friend and kinde companion, who alwayes used to keepe him company, in the neerest occasions that concerned him. The Gentlewoman, or rather most disloyall wife, uppon this answer sent her, was extraordinarily jocond and contented, returning him a secret Letter, wherein she signified: that Gasparuolo her husband, had important affaires which called him to Geneway: but he should understand of his departure, and then (with safety) he might come see her, as also his bringing of the Crownes.

In the meane while, Gulfardo having determined what he would do, watched a convenient time, when he went unto Gasparuolo, and sayde: Sir, I have some businesse of maine importance, and shall neede to use but two hundred Crownes onely: I desire you to lend me so many Crownes, upon such profite as you were wont to take of mee, at other times when I have made use of you, and I shall not faile you at my day.

Gasparuolo was well contented with the motion, and made no more adoe, but counted downe the Crownes: departing thence (within a few dayes after) for Geneway, according to his Wives former message; she giving Gulfardo also intelligence of his absence, that now (with safety) hee might come see her, and bring the two hundred Crownes with him.

Gulfardo, taking his friend in his company, went to visite Mistresse Ambrosia, whom he found in expectation of his arrivall, and the first thing he did, he counted downe the two hundred Crownes; and delivering them to her in the presence of his friend, saide: Mistresse Ambrosia, receive these two hundred Crownes, which I desire you to pay unto your Husband on my behalfe, when he is returned from Geneway. Ambrosia, receyved the two hundred Crownes, not regarding wherefore Gulfardo used these words: because shee verily beleeved, that hee spake in such manner, because his friend should take no notice, of his giving them to her, upon any covenant passed betweene them; whereuppon, she sayde. Sir, I will pay them to my Husband for you; and cause him to give you a sufficient discharge: but first I will count them over my selfe, to see whether the summe be just, or no. And having drawne them over upon the Table, the summe containing truly two hundred Crownes (wherewith she was most highly contented) she lockt them safe uppe in her Cuppeboord, and Gulfardoes Friend being gone (as formerly it was compacted betweene them) shee came to converse more familiarly with him, having provided a banquet for him. What passed between them afterward, both then, and oftentimes beside, before her Husbande returned home, is a matter out of my element, and rather requires my ignorance then knowledge.

When Gasparuolo was come from Geneway, Gulfardo observing a convenient time, when he was sitting at the doore with his Wife; tooke his Friend with him, and comming to Gasparuolo, said. Worthy Sir, the two hundred Crownes which you lent me, before your journy to Geneway, in regard they could not serve my turne, to compasse the businesse for which I borrowed them: within a day or two after, in the presence of this Gentle man my friend, I made repayment of them to your Wife, and therefore I pray you crosse me out of your booke.

Gasparuolo turning to his Wife, demanded; Whether it was so, or no? She beholding the witnesse standing by, who was also present at her receyving them: durst not make deniall, but thus answered. Indeede Husband, I received two hundred Crownes of the Gentleman, and never remembred, to acquaint you therewith since your comming home: but hereafter I will be made no more your receiver, except I carried a quicker memory.

Then saide Gasparuolo: Signior Gulfardo, I finde you alwaies a most honest Gentleman, and will be readie at any time, to doe you the like, or a farre greater kindnesse; depart at your pleasure, and feare not the crossing of my Booke. So Gulfardo went away merily contented, and Ambrosia was served as she justly merited; she paying the price of her owne leudnesse to her Husband, which she had a more covetous intent to keepe, questionlesse, not caring how many like lustfull matches shee coulde make, to be so liberally rewarded, if this had succeeded to her minde: whereas he shewed himselfe wise and discreete, in paying nothing for his pleasure, and requiting a covetous queane in her kinde.

THE SECOND NOVELL

APPROVING, THAT NO PROMISE IS TO BE KEPT WITH SUCH WOMEN AS WILL MAKE SALE OF THEIR HONESTY FOR COYNE. A WARNING ALSO FOR MEN, NOT TO SUFFER PRIESTS TO BE OVER FAMILIAR WITH THEIR WIVES.

A LUSTIE *youthfull Priest of Varlungo, fell in love with a pretty woman, named Monna Belcolore. To compasse his amorous desire, hee lefte his Cloake (as a pledge of further payment) with her. By a subtile sleight afterward, he made meanes to borrow a Morter of her, which when hee sent home againe in the presence of her Husband; he demaunded to have his Cloake sent him, as having left it in pawne for the Morter. To pacifie her Husband, offended that shee did not lend the Priest the Morter without a pawne: she sent him backe his Cloake againe, albeit greatly against her will.*

Both the Gentlemen and Ladies gave equall commendations, of Gulfardoes queint beguiling the Millaine Gentle-woman Ambrosia, and wishing all other (of her minde) might alwaies be so served. Then the Queene, smiling on Pamphilus, commaunded him to follow next: whereupon, thus he began.

I can tell you (faire Ladies) a short Novell, against such as are continually offensive to us, yet we being no way able to offend him; at least, in the same manner as they do injurie us. And for your better understanding what and who they be, they are our lusty Priests, who advance their Standard, and make their publike predications against our wives, winning such advantage over them, that they can pardon them both of the sinne and punnishment, whensoever they are once subjected unto theyr perswasions, even as if they brought the Soldane bound and captived, from Alexandria to Avignon. Which imperious power, we (poore soules) cannot exercise on them, considering, we have neither heart nor courage, to do our devoire in just revenge on their Mothers, Sisters, Daughters, and Friends, with the like spirit as they rise in armes against our wives. And therefore, I meane to tell you a tale of a Country mans wife, more to make you laugh at the conclusion thereof; then for any singularity of words or matter: yet this benefite you may gaine thereby, of an apparant proofe, that such Sinamon, amorous and perswading Priests, are not alwayes to be credited on their words or promises.

Let me then tell you, that at Varlungo, which you know to bee not farre distant hence, there dwelt an youthfull Priest, lustie, gallant, and proper of person (especially for Womens service) commonly called by the name of sweet Sir Simon. Now, albeit he was a man of slender reading, yet notwithstanding, he had store of Latine sentences by heart; some true, but twice so many maimed and false, Saint-like shewes, holy speeches, and ghostly admonitions, which hee would preach under an Oake in the fields, when he had congregated his Parishioners together. When women lay in childebed, hee was their daily comfortable visitant, and would man them from their houses, when they had any occasion to walke abroad: carrying alwaies a bottle of holy water about him, wherewith he would sprinkle them by the way, peeces of halowed Candles, and Chrisome Cakes, which pleased women extraordinarily, and all the Country affoorded not such another frolicke Priest, as this our nimble and active sweet Sir Simon.

Among many other of his feminine Parishioners, all of them being hansome and comely Women: yet there was one more pleasing in his wanton eye, then any of the rest, named Monna Belcolore, and wife to a plaine mecanicke man, called Bentivegna del Mazzo. And, to speake uprightly, few Countrey Villages yeelded a Woman, more fresh and lovely of complexion, although not admirable for beauty, yet sweete Sir Simon thoght her a Saint, and faine would be offering at her shrine. Divers prety pleasing qualities she had, as sounding the Cymball, playing artificially on the Timbrill, and singing thereto as it had beene a Nightingale, dancing also so dexteriously, as happy was the man that could dance in her company. All which so enflamed sweet Sir Simon, that he lost his wonted sprightly behaviour, walked sullen, sad and melancholly, as if he had melted all his mettall, because hee could hardly have a sight of her. But on the Sonday morning, when hee heard or knew that she was in the Church, hee would tickle it with a Kyrie and a Sanctus, even as if hee contended to shewe his singular skill in singing, when it had beene as good to heare an Asse bray. Whereas on the contrary, when she came not to Church, Masse, and all else were quicklie shaken uppe, as if his devotion waited onely on her presence. Yet he was so cunning in the carriage of his amorous businesse, both for her credite and his owne; as Bentivegna her husband could not perceive it, or any neighbor so much as suspect it.

But, to compasse more familiar acquaintance with Belcolore, hee sent her sundry gifts and presents, day by day, as sometime a bunch of dainty greene Garlicke, whereof he had plenty growing in his Garden, which he manured with his owne hands, and better then all the countrey yeelded; otherwhiles a small basket of Pease or Beanes, and Onyons or Scallions, as the season served. But when he could come in place where she was; then he darted amourous wincks and glances at her, with becks, nods, and blushes, Loves private Ambassadours, which shee (being but countrey-bred) seeming by outward appearance, not to see, retorted disdainefully, and forthwith would absent her selfe, so that sweet Sir Simon laboured still in vaine, and could not compasse what he coveted.

It came to passe within a while after, that on a time, (about high noone) Sir Simon being walking abroad, chanced to meete with Bentivegna, driving an Asse before him, laden with divers commodities, and demaunding of him, whither he went, Bentivegna, thus answered. In troth Sir Simon, I am going to the City, about some especiall businesse of mine owne, and I carry these things to Signior Bonacorci da Ginestreto, because he should helpe me before the Judge, when I shall be called in question concerning my patrimony. Sir Simon looking merily on him, said. Thou doest well Bentivegna, to make a friend sure before thou need him; goe, take my blessing with thee, and returne againe with good successe. But if thou meet with Laguccio, or Naldino, forget not to tell them, that they must bring me my shooe-tyes before Sunday. Bentivegna said, hee would discharge his errand, and so parted from him, driving his Asse on towards Florence.

Now began Sir Simon to shrug, and scratch his head, thinking this to be a fit convenient time, for him to goe visite Belcolore, and to make triall of his fortune: wherefore, setting aside all other businesse, he stayed no where till he came to the house, whereinto being entred, he saide: All happinesse be to them that dwell heere. Belcolore being then above in the Chamber, when she heard his tongue, replyed. Sweet Sir Simon! you are heartely welcome, whether are you walking, if the question may bee demaunded? Beleeve me dainty Ducke, answered Sir Simon, I am come to sit a while with thee, because I met thy Husband going to the Citie. By this time, Belcolore was descended downe the stayres, and having once againe given welcome to Sir Simon, she sate downe by him, cleansing of Colewort seeds from such other course chaffe, which her Husband had prepared before his departure.

Sir Simon hugging her in his armes, and fetching a vehement sigh, said. My Belcolore, how long shall I pine and languish for thy love? How now Sir Simon? answered she, is this behaviour fitting for an holy man? Holy-men Belcolore, (quoth Sir Simon) are made of the same matter as others be, they have the same affections, and therefore subject to their infirmities. Santa Maria, answered Belcolore, Dare Priests doe such things as you talke of? Yes Belcolore (quoth he) and much better then other men can, because they are made for the very best businesse, in which regard they are restrained from marriage. True (quoth Belcolore) but much more from medling with other mens wives. Touch not that Text Belcolore, replyed Sir Simon, it is somewhat above your capacity: talke of that I come for, namely thy love, my Ducke, and my Dove, Sir Simon is thine, I pray thee be mine.

Belcolore observing his smirking behaviour, his proper person, pretty talke, and queint insinuating; felt a motion to female frailty, which yet she would withstand so long as she could, and not be over-hasty in her yeelding. Sir Simon promiseth her a new paire of shoes, garters, ribbands, girdles, or what else she would request. Sir Simon (quoth she) all these things which you talke of, are fit for women: but if your love to mee be such as you make choice of, fulfill what I will motion to you, and then (perhaps) I shall tell you more. Sir Simons heate made him hasty to promise whatsoever she would desire; whereupon, thus shee replyed. On Saturday, said she, I must goe to Florence, to carry home such yarne as was sent me to spinne, and to amend my spinning wheele: if you will lend mee ten Florines, wherewith I know you are alwayes furnished, I shall redeeme from the Usurer my best peticote, and my wedding gowne (both well neere lost for lacke of repaiment) without which I cannot be seene at Church, or in any other good place else, and then afterward other matters may be accomplished.

Alas sweete Belcolore answered Sir Simon, I never beare any such sum about me, for men of our profession, doe seldome carry any money at all: but beleeve me on my word, before Saturday come, I will not faile to bring them hither. Oh Sir (quoth Belcolore) you men are quicke promisers, but slow performers. Doe you thinke to use me, as poore Billezza was, who trusted to as faire words, and found her selfe deceived? Now Sir Simon, her example in being made scandall to the world, is a sufficient warning for me: if you be not so provided, goe and make use of your friend, for I am not otherwise to be moved. Nay Belcolore (quoth he) I hope you will not serve me so, but my word shall be of better worth with you. Consider the conveniency of time, wee being so privately here alone: whereas at my returning hither againe, some hinderance may thwart me, and the like opportunity be never obtained. Sir, Sir, (said she) you have heard my resolution; if you will fetche the Florines, doe; otherwise, walke about your businesse, for I am a woman of my word.

Sir Simon perceiving, that she would not trust him upon bare words, nor any thing was to be done, without *Salvum me fac*, whereas his meaning was *Sine custodia;* thus answered. Well Belcolore, seeing you dare not credit my bringing the tenne Florines, according to my promised day: I will leave you a good pawne, my very best Cloake, lyned quite thorough with rich Silke, and made up in the choysest manner.

Belcolore looking on the Cloake, said. How much may this Cloake bee worth? How much? quoth Sir Simon, upon my word Belcolore, it is of a right fine Flanders Serdge, and not above eight dayes since, I bought it thus (ready made) of Lotto the Fripperer, and payed for it sixe and twenty

Florines, a pledge then sufficient for your ten. Is it possible, said shee, that it should cost so much? Well, Sir Simon, deliver it me first, I will lay it up safe for you against Saturday, when if you fetch it not; I will redeeme mine owne things with it, and leave you to release it your selfe.

The Cloake is laid up by Belcolore, and Sir Simon so forward in his affection; that (in briefe) he enjoyed what hee came for; and departed afterward in his light tripping Cassocke, but yet thorow by-Lanes, and no much frequented places, smelling on a Nosegay, as if hee had beene at some wedding in the Countrey, and went thus lightly without his Cloake, for his better ease. As commonly after actions of evill, Repentance knocketh at the doore of Conscience, and urgeth a guilty remembrance, with some sence of sorrow: so was it now with sweet Sir Simon, who survaying over all his vailes of offering Candles, the validity of his yearely benefits, and all comming nothing neere the summe of (scarce halfe) sixe and twenty Florines; he began to repent his deed of darkenesse, although it was acted in the day-time, and considered with himselfe, by what honest (yet unsuspected meanes) hee might recover his Cloake againe, before it went to the Broaker, in redemption of Belcolores pawned apparrell, and yet to send her no Florines neither.

Having a cunning reaching wit, especially in matters for his owne advantage, and pretending to have a dinner at his lodging, for a few of some invited friends: he made use of a neighbours Boy, sending him to the house of Belcolore, with request of lending him her Stone Morter, to make Greene-sawce in for his guests, because hee had meate required such sawce. Belcolore suspecting no treachery, sent him the Stone Morter with the Pestell, and about dinner time, when he knew Bentivegna to bee at home with his wife, by a spye which was set for the purpose; hee called the Clearke (usually attending on him) and said. Take this Morter and Pestell, beare them home to Belcolore, and tell her: Sir Simon sends them home with thankes, they having sufficiently served his turne, and desire her likewise, to send me my Cloake, which the Boy left as a pledge for better remembrance, and because she would not lend it without a pawne.

The Clearke comming to the house of Belcolore, found her sitting at dinner with her Husband, and delivering her the Pestell and Morter, performed the rest of Sir Simons message. Belcolore hearing the Cloake demaunded, stept up to make answere: But Bentivegna, seeming (by his lookes) to be much offended, roughly replyed. Why how now wife? Is not Sir Simon our especiall friend, and cannot he be pleasured without a pawne? I protest upon my word, I could find in my heart to smite thee for it. Rise quickely thou wert best, and send him backe his Cloake; with this warning hereafter, that whatsoever he will have, be it your poore Asse, or any thing else being ours, let him have it: and tell him (Master Clearke) he may command it. Belcolore rose grumbling from the Table, and fetching the Cloake forth of the Chest, which stood neere at hand in the same roome; shee delivered it to the Clearke, saying. Tell Sir Simon from me, and boldly say you heard me speake it: that I make a vow to my selfe, he shall never make use of my Morter hereafter, to beat any more of his sawcinesse in, let my Husband say whatsoever he will, I speake the word, and will performe it.

Away went the Clearke home with the Cloake, and told Sir Simon what she had said, whereto he replyed. If I must make use of her Morter no more; I will not trust her with the keeping of my Cloake, for feare it goe to gage indeed.

Bentivegna was a little displeased at his wives words, because hee thought she spake but in jest; albeit Belcolore was so angry with Sir Simon, that she would not speake to him till vintage time following. But then Sir Simon, what by sharpe threatenings, of her soule to be in danger of hell fire, continuing so long in hatred of a holy Priest, which words did not a little terrifie her; besides daily presents to her, of sweet new Wines, roasted Chesse-nuts, Figges and Almonds: all unkindnesse became converted to former familiarity; the garments were redeemed: he gave her Sonnets which she would sweetly sing to her Cimbale, and further friendship increased betweene her and sweet Sir Simon.

THE THIRD NOVELL

JUSTLY REPREHENDING THE SIMPLICITY OF SUCH MEN, AS ARE TOO MUCH ADDICTED TO CREDULITIE, AND WILL GIVE CREDIT TO EVERY THING THEY HEARE.

CALANDRINO, *Bruno, and Buffalmaco, all of them being Painters by profession, travelled to the Plaine of Mugnone, to finde the precious Stone called Helitropium. Calandrino perswaded himselfe to have found it; returned home to his house heavily loaden with stones. His Wife rebuking him for his absence, hee groweth into anger, and shrewdly beateth her. Afterward, when the case is debated among his other friends Bruno and Buffalmaco, all is found to be meere foolery.*

PAMPHILUS having ended his Novell, whereat the Ladies laughed exceedingly, so that very hardly they could give over. The Queene gave charge to Madame Eliza, that shee should next succeed in order; when, being scarcely able to refraine from smyling, thus she began.

I know not (Gracious Ladies) whether I can move you to as hearty laughter, with a briefe Novell of mine owne, as Pamphilus lately did with his: yet I dare assure you, that it is both true and pleasant, and I will relate it in the best manner I can.

In our owne Citie, which evermore hath contained all sorts of people, not long since there dwelt, a Painter, named Calandrino, a simple man; yet as much adicted to matters of novelty, as any man whatsoever could be. The most part of his time, he spent in the company of two other Painters, the one called Bruno, and the other Buffalmaco, men of very recreative spirits, and of indifferent good capacity, often resorting to the said Calandrino, because they tooke delight in his honest simplicity, and pleasant order of behaviour. At the same time likewise, there dwelt in Florence, a yong Gentleman of singular disposition, to every generous and witty conceite, as the world did not yeeld a more pleasant companion, he being named Maso del Saggio, who having heard somwhat of Calandrinos sillinesse: determined to jest with him in merry manner, and to suggest his longing humors after Novelties, with some conceit of extraordinary nature.

He happening (on a day) to meete him in the Church of Saint John, and seeing him seriously busied, in beholding the rare pictures, and the curious carved Tabernacle, which (not long before) was placed on the high Altar in the said Church: considered with himselfe, that he had now fit place and opportunity, to effect what hee had long time desired. And having imparted his minde to a very intimate friend, how he intended to deale with simple Calandrino: they went both very neere him, where he sate all alone, and making shew as if they saw him not; began to consult between themselves, concerning the rare properties of precious stones; whereof Maso discoursed as exactly, as he had beene a most skilfull Lapidarie; to which conference of theirs, Calandrino lent an attentive eare, in regard it was matter of singular rarity.

Soone after, Calandrino started up, and

perceiving by their loude speaking, that they talked of nothing which required secret Counsell: he went into their company (the onely thing which Maso desired) and holding on still the former Argument; Calandrino would needs request to know, in what place these precious stones were to be found, which had such excellent vertues in them? Maso made answere, that the most of them were to be had in Berlinzona, neere to the City of Bascha, which was in the Territory of a Countrey, called Bengodi, where the Vines were bound about with Sawcidges, a Goose was sold for a penny, and the Goslings freely given in to boote. There was also an high mountaine, wholly made of Parmezane, grated Cheese, whereon dwelt people, who did nothing else but make Mocharones and Ravivolies, boyling them with broth of Capons, and afterward hurled them all about, to whosoever can or will catch them. Neere to this mountaine runneth a faire River, the whole streame being pure white Bastard, none such was ever sold for any money, and without one drop of water in it.

Now trust me Sir, (said Calandrino) that is an excellent Countrey to dwell in: but I pray you tell me Sir, what doe they with the Capons after they have boyld them? The Baschanes (quoth Maso) eate them all. Have you Sir, said Calandrino, at any time beene in that Countrey? How? answered Maso, doe you demaund if I have beene there? Yes man, above a thousand times, at the least. How farre Sir, I pray you (quoth Calandrino) is that worthy Countrey, from this our City? In troth, replyed Maso, the miles are hardly to be numbred, for the most part of them, we travell when we are nightly in our beddes, and if a man dreame right; he may be there upon a sudden.

Surely Sir, said Calandrino, it is further hence, then to Abruzzi? Yes questionlesse, replyed Maso; but, to a willing minde, no travell seemeth tedious.

Calandrino well noting, that Maso delivered all these speeches, with a stedfast countenance, no signe of smyling, or any gesture to urge the least mislike: he gave such credit to them, as to any matter of apparent and manifest truth, and upon this assured confidence, he said.

Beleeve me Sir, the journey is over-farre for mee to undertake, but if it were neerer; I could affoord to goe in your Company; onely to see how they make these Macherones, and to fill my belly with them.

But now wee are in talke Sir, I pray you pardon mee to aske, whether any such precious stones, as you spake off, are to be found in that Countrey, or no? Yes indeed, replyed Maso, there are two kinds of them to be found in those Territories, both being of very great vertue. One kind, are gritty stones, of Settignano, and of Montisca, by vertue of which places, when any Mill-stones or Grind-stones are to bee made, they knede the sand as they use to doe meale, and so make them of what bignesse they please. In which respect, they have a common saying there: that Nature maketh common stones, but Montisca Mill-stones. Such plenty are there of these Mill-stones, so slenderly here esteemed among us, as Emeralds are with them, whereof they have whole mountaines, farre greater then our Montemorello, which shine most gloriously at midnight. And how meanly soever we account of their Mill-stones; yet there they drill them, and enchase them in Rings, which afterward they send to the great Soldane, and have whatsoever they will demaund for them.

The other kinde is a most precious Stone indeede, which our best Lapidaries call the Helitropium, the vertue whereof is so admirable; as whosoever beareth it about him, so long as he keepeth it, it is impossible for any eye to discerne him, because he walketh meerely invisible. O Lord Sir (quoth Calandrino) those stones are of rare vertue indeede: but where else may a man finde that Helitropium? Whereto Maso thus answered: That Countrey onely doth not containe the Helitropium; for they be many times found upon our plaine of Mugnone. Of what bignesse Sir (quoth Calandrino) is the Stone, and what coulour? The Helitropium, answered Maso, is not alwayes of one quality, because some are bigge, and others lesse; but all are of one coulour, namely blacke.

Calandrino committing all these things to respective memory, and pretending to be called thence by some other especiall affaires; departed from Maso, concluding resolvedly with himselfe, to finde this precious stone, if possibly hee could: yet intending to doe nothing, untill hee had acquainted Bruno and Buffalmaco therewith, whom he loved dearly: he went in all hast to seeke them; because, (without any longer trifling the time) they three might bee the first men, that should find out this precious stone, spending almost the whole morning before they were all three met together. For they were painting at the Monastery of the Sisters of Faenza, where they had very serious imployment, and followed their businesse diligently: where having found them, and saluting them in such kinde manner, as continually he used to doe, thus he began.

Loving friends, if you were pleased to follow mine advise, wee three will quickely be the richest men in Florence; because, by information from a Gentleman (well deserving to be credited) on the Plaine of Mugnone: there is a precious stone to be found, which whosoever carrieth it about him, walketh invisible, and is not to be seene by any one. Let us three be the first men to goe and finde it, before any other heare thereof, and goe about it, and assure our selves that we shall finde it, for I know it (by discription) so soone as I see it. And when wee have it, who can hinder us from bearing it about us? Then will we goe to the Tables of our Bankers, or money Changers, which we see daily charged with plenty of gold and silver, where we may take so much as wee list, for they (nor any) are able to descrie us. So, (in short time) shall wee all be wealthy, never needing to drudge any more, or paint muddy walles, as hitherto we have done; and, as many of our poore profession are forced to doe.

Bruno and Buffalmaco hearing this, began to smile, and looking merily each on other, they seemed to wonder thereat, and greatly commended the counsell of Calandrino. Buffalmaco demaunding how the stone was named. Now it fortuned, that Calandrino (who had but a grosse and blockish memory) had quite forgot the name of the stone, and therefore said. What neede have wee of the name, when we know, and are assured of the stones vertue? Let us make no more adoe, but (setting aside all other businesse) goe seeke where it is to be found. Well my friend (answered Bruno) you say wee may finde it, but how, and by what meanes?

There are two sorts of them (quoth Calandrino) some bigge, others smaller, but all carry a blacke colour: therefore (in mine opinion) let us gather all such stones as are blacke, so shall we be sure to finde it among them, without any further losse of time.

Buffalmaco and Bruno, liked and allowed the counsell of Calandrino, which when they had (by severall commendations) given him assurance of, Bruno saide. I doe not thinke it a convenient time now, for us to go about so weighty a businesse: for the Sun is yet in the highest degree, and striketh such a heate on the plaine of Mugnone, as all the stones are extreamly dryed, and the very blackest will nowe seeme whitest. But in the morning, after the dew is falne, and before the Sunne shineth forth, every stone retaineth his true colour. Moreover, there be many Labourers now working on the plaine, about such businesse as they are severally assigned, who seeing us in so serious a serch: may imagine what we seeke for, and partake with us in the same inquisition, by which meanes they may chance to speed before us, and so wee may lose both our trot and amble. Wherefore, by my consent, if your opinion jumpe with mine, this is an enterprize onely to be performed in an early morning, when the blacke stones are to be distinguisht from the white, and a Festivall day were the best of all other, for then there will be none to discover us.

Buffalmaco applauded the advice of Bruno, and Calandrino did no lesse, concluding all together; that Sunday morning (next ensuing) should be the time, and then they all three would go seeke the Stone. But Calandrino was verie earnest with them, that they shold not reveale it to any living body, because it was tolde him as an especiall secret: disclosing further to them, what hee had heard concerning the Countrey of Bengodi, maintaining (with solemn oaths and protestations) that every part thereof was true. Uppon this agreement, they parted from Calandrino, who hardly enjoyed anie rest at all, either by night or day, so greedie he was to bee possessed of the stone. On the Sonday morning, hee called up his Companions before breake of day, and going forth at S. Galls Port, they stayed not, till they came to the plaine of Mugnone, where they searched all about to finde this strange stone.

Calandrino went stealing before the other two, and verilie perswaded himselfe, that he was borne to finde the Helitropium, and looking on every side about him, hee rejected all other Stones but the blacke, whereof first he filled his bosome, and afterwards, both his Pockets. Then he tooke off his large painting Apron, which he fastened with his girdle in the manner of a sacke, and that he filled full of stones likewise. Yet not so satisfied, he spred abroad his Cloake, which being also full of stones, hee bound it up carefully, for feare of loosing the very least of them. All which Buffalmaco and Bruno well observing (the day growing on, and hardly they could reach home by dinner time) according as merrily they had concluded, and pretending not to see Calandrino, albeit he was not farre from them: What is become of Calandrino? saide Buffalmaco. Bruno gazing strangely every where about him, as if hee were desirous to finde him, replyed. I saw him not long since, for then he was hard by before us; questionlesse, he hath given us the slippe, is privilie gone home to dinner, and making starke fooles of us, hath lefte us to picke up blacke stones, upon the parching plaines of Mugnone. Well (quoth Buffalmaco) this is but the tricke of an hollow-hearted friend, and not such as he protested himselfe to be, to us. Could any but wee have bin so sottish, to credit his frivolous perswasions, hoping to finde any stones of such vertue, and here on the fruitlesse plains of Mugnone? No, no, none but we would have beleeved him.

Calandrino (who was close by them) hearing these wordes, and seeing the whole manner of their wondering behaviour: became constantly perswaded, that hee had not onely found the precious stone; but also had some store of them about him, by reason he was so neere to them, and yet they could not see him, therefore he walked before them. Now was his joy beyond all compasse of expression, and being exceedingly proud of so happy an adventure: did not meane to speake one word to them, but (heavily laden as hee was) to steale home faire and softly before them, which indeede he did, leaving them to follow after, if they would. Bruno perceiving his intent, said to Buffalmaco: What remaineth now for us to doe? Why should not we go home, as well as hee? And reason too, replyed Bruno. It is in vaine to tarry any longer heere: but I solemnly protest, Calandrino shall no more make an Asse of me: and were I now as neere him, as not long since I was, I would give him such a remembrance on the heele with this Flint stone, as should sticke by him this moneth, to teach him a lesson for abusing his friends.

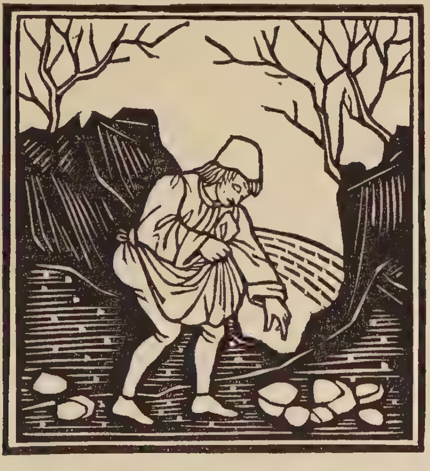
Hee threw the stone, and hit him shrewdly on the heele therewith; but all was one to Calandrino, whatsoever they saide, or did, as thus they still followed after him. And although the blow of the stone was painfull to him; yet he mended his pace so wel as he was able, in regard of beeing over-loaden with stones, and gave them not one word all the way, because he tooke himselfe to bee invisible, and utterly unseene of them. Buffalmaco taking uppe another Flint-stone, which was indifferent heavie and sharp, said to Bruno. Seest thou this Flint? Casting it from him, he smote Calandrino just in the backe therewith, saying. Oh that Calandrino had bin so neere, as I might have hit him on the backe with the stone. And thus all the way on the plaine of Mugnone, they did nothing else but pelt him with stones, even so farre as the Port of S. Gall, where they threwe downe what other stones they had gathered, meaning not to molest him any more, because they had done enough already.

There they stept before him unto the Port, and acquainted the Warders with the whole matter, who laughing heartily at the jest, the better to upholde it; would seeme not to see Calandrino in his passage by them, but suffered him to go on, sore wearied with his burthen, and sweating extreamly. Without resting himselfe in any place, he came home to his house, which was neere to the corner of the Milles, Fortune being so favourable to him in the course of this mockery, that as he passed along the Rivers side, and afterward through part of the City; he was neither met nor seen by any, in regard they were all in their houses at dinner.

Calandrino, every minute ready to sinke under his weightie burthen, entred into his owne house, where (by great ill luck) his wife, being a comely and very honest woman, and named Monna Trista, was standing aloft on the stayres head. She being somewhat angry for his so long absence, and seeing him come in grunting and groaning, frowningly said. I thought that the divell would never let thee come home, all the whole Citie have dined, and yet wee must remaine without our dinner. When Calandrino heard this, and perceived that he was not invisible to his Wife: full of rage and wroth, hee began to raile, saying. Ah thou wicked woman, where art thou? Thou hast utterly undone me: but (as I live) I will pay thee soundly for it. Up the staires he ascended into a small Parlour, where when he hadde spred all his burthen of stones on the floore: he ran to his wife, catching her by the haire of the head, and throwing her at his feete; giving her so many spurns and cruel blowes, as shee was not able to moove either armes or legges, notwithstanding all her teares, and humble submission.

Now Buffalmaco and Bruno, after they had spent an indifferent while, with the Warders at the Port in laughter; in a faire and gentle pace, they followed Calandrino home to his house, and being come to the doore, they heard the harsh bickering betweene him and his Wife, and seeming as if they were but newly arrived, they called out alowd to him. Calandrino being in a sweate, stamping and raving still at his Wife: looking forth of the window, entreated them to ascend up to him, which they did, counterfetting greevous displeasure against him. Being come into the roome, which they saw all covered over with stones, his Wife sitting in a corner, all the haire (well-neere) torne off her head, her face broken and bleeding, and all her body cruelly beaten; on the other side, Calandrino standing unbraced and ungirded, strugling and wallowing, like a man quite out of breath: after a little pausing, Bruno thus spake.

Why how now Calandrino? What may the meaning of this matter be? What, art thou preparing for building, that thou hast provided such plenty of stones? How sitteth thy poore wife? How hast thou misused her? Are these the behaviours of a wise or honest man? Calandrino, utterly over-spent with travaile, and carrying such an huge burthen of stones, as also the toylesome beating of his Wife, (but much more impatient and offended, for that high good Fortune, which he imagined to have lost:) could not collect his spirits together, to answer them one ready word, wherefore hee sate fretting like a mad man. Whereupon, Buffalmaco thus began to him. Calandrino, if thou be angry with any other, yet thou shouldest not have made such a mockery of us, as thou hast done: in leaving us (like a couple of coxcombes) to the plaine of Mugnone, whether thou leddest us with thee, to seeke a precious stone called Helitropium. And couldst thou steale home, never bidding us so much as farewell? How can we but take it in very evill part, that thou shouldest so abuse two honest neighbours? Well, assure thy selfe, this is the last time that ever thou shalt serve us so.



Calandrino (by this time) being somewhat better come to himselfe, with an humble protestation of courtesie, returned them this answer. Alas my good friends, be not you offended, the case is farre otherwise then you immagine. Poore unfortunate man that I am, I found the rare precious stone that you speake of: and marke me well, if I do not tell you the truth of all. When you asked one another (the first time) what was become of me; I was hard by you: at the most, within the distance of two yards length; and perceiving that you saw mee not, (being still so neere, and alwaies before you:) I went on, smiling to my selfe, to heare you brabble and rage against me.

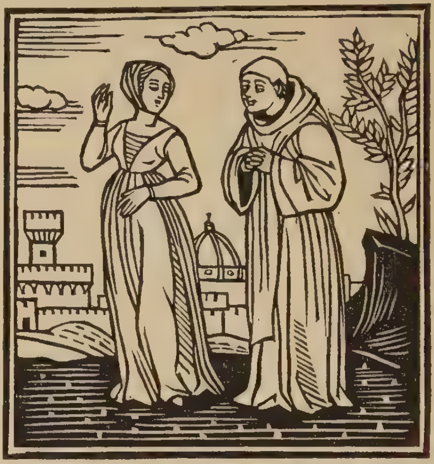
So, proceeding on in his discourse, he recounted every accident as it hapned, both what they had saide and did unto him, concerning the severall blowes, with the two Flint-stones, the one hurting him greevously in the heele, and the other paining him as extreamly in the backe, with their speeches used then, and his laughter, notwithstanding hee felt the harme of them both, yet beeing proud that he did so invisibly beguile them. Nay more (quoth he) I cannot forbeare to tell you, that when I passed thorow the Port, I saw you standing with the Warders; yet, by vertue of that excellent Stone, undiscovered of you all. Beside, going along the streets, I met many of my Gossips, friends, and familiar acquaintance, such as used daylie to converse with me, and drinking together in every Tavern: yet not one of them spake to me, neyther used any courtesie or salutation; which (indeede) I did the more freely forgive them, because they were not able to see me.

In the end of all, when I was come home into mine owne house, this divellish and accursed woman, being aloft uppon my stayres head, by much misfortune chanced to see me; in regard (as it is not unknowne to you) that women cause all things to lose their vertue. In which respect, I that could have stild my selfe the onely happy man in Florence, am now made most miserable. And therefore did I justly beate her, so long as she was able to stand against mee, and I know no reason to the contrary, why I should not yet teare her in a thousand peeces: for I may well curse the day of our mariage, to hinder and bereave me of such an invisible blessednesse.

Buffalmaco and Bruno hearing this, made shew of verie much mervailing thereat, and many times maintained what Calandrino had said; being well neere ready to burst with laughter; considering, how confidently he stood upon it, that he had found the wonderful stone, and lost it by his wives speaking onely to him. But when they saw him rise in fury once more, with intent to beat her againe: then they stept betweene them; affirming, That the woman had no way offended in this case, but rather he himself: who knowing that women cause all things to lose their vertue, had not therefore expresly commanded her, not to be seene in his presence all that day, untill he had made full proofe of the stones vertue. And questionles, the consideration of a matter so availeable and important, was quite taken from him, because such an especiall happinesse, should not belong to him only; but (in part) to his friends, whom he had acquainted therewith, drew them to the plaine with him in companie, where they tooke as much paines in serch of the stone, as possibly he did, or could; and yet (dishonestly) he would deceive them, and beare it away covetously, for his owne private benefit.

After many other, as wise and wholesome perswasions, which he constantly credited, because they spake them, they reconciled him to his wife, and she to him: but not without some difficulty in him; who falling into wonderfull greefe and melancholy, for losse of such an admirable precious stone, was in danger to have dyed, within lesse then a month after.

THE FOURTH NOVELL



WHEREIN IS DECLARED, HOW LOVE OFTENTIMES IS SO POWERFULL IN AGED MEN, AND DRIVETH THEM TO SUCH DOATING, THAT IT REDOUNDETH TO THEIR GREAT DISGRACE AND PUNISHMENT.

THE *Provost belonging to the Cathedrall Church of Fiesola, fell in love with a Gentlewoman, being a widdow, and named Piccarda, who hated him as much as he loved her. He imagining, that he lay with her: by the Gentlewomans Bretheren, and the Byshop under whom he served, was taken in bed with her Mayde, an ugly, foule, deformed Slut.*

LADIE Eliza having concluded her Novell, not without infinite commendations of the whole company: the Queen turning her lookes to Madame Æmillia, gave her such an expresse signe, as she must needs follow next after Madame Eliza, whereupon she began in this manner.

Vertuous Ladies, I very well remember (by divers Novels formerly related) that sufficient hath beene sayde, concerning Priests and Religious persons, and all other carrying shaven Crownes, in their luxurious appetites and desires. But because no one can at any time say so much, as thereto no more may be added: beside them alreadie spoken of, I wil tel you another concerning the Provost of a Cathedral Church, who would needes (in despight of all the world) love a Gentlewoman whether she would or no: and therefore, in due chastisement both unto his age and folly, she gave him such entertainment as he justly deserved.

It is not unknowne unto you all, that the Cittie of Fieosola, the mountaine whereof we may very easily hither discerne, hath bene (in times past) a very great and most ancient City: although at this day it is wellneere all ruined: yet neverthelesse, it alwaies was, and yet is a Byshops See, albeit not of the wealthiest. In the same Citie, and no long while since, neere unto the Cathedrall Church, there dwelt a Gentlewoman, being a Widdow, and commonlie there stiled by the name of Madame Piccarda, whose house and inheritance was but small, wherewith yet she lived very contentedly (having no wandering eye, or wanton desires) and no company but her two Brethren, Gentlemen of especiall honest and gracious disposition.

This Gentlewoman, being yet in the flourishing condition of her time, did ordinarily resort to the Cathedrall Church, in holie zeale, and religious devotion; where the Provost of the place, became so enamored of her, as nothing (but the sight of her) yeelded him any contentment. Which fond affection of his, was forwarded with such an audacious and bold carriage, as hee dared to acquaint her with his love, requiring her enterchange of affection, and the like opinion of him, as he had of her. True it is, that he was very farre entred into yeares, but yong and lustie in his own proud conceite, presuming strangely beyond his capacity, and thinking as well of his abilitie, as the youthfullest gallant in the World could doe. Whereas (in verie deede) his person was utterly displeasing, his behaviour immodest and scandalous, and his usuall Language, savouring of such sensualitie, as, very fewe or none cared for his company. And if any Woman seemed respective of him, it was in regard of his outside and profession, and more for feare, then the least affection, and alwayes as welcome to them, as the head-ake.

His fond and foolish carriage stil continuing to this Gentlewoman; she being wise and vertuously advised, spake thus unto him. Holy Sir, if you love me according as you protest, and manifest by your outward behaviour: I am the more to thanke you for it, being bound in dutie to love you likewise. But if your Love have any harshe or unsavourie taste, which mine is no way able to endure, neyther dare entertaine in anie kinde whatsoever: you must and shall hold mee excused, because I am made of no such temper. You are my ghostly and spirituall Father, an Holy Priest. Moreover, yeares have made you honorably aged; all which severall weighty considerations, ought to confirme you in continency and chastity. Remember withall (good sir) that I am but a child to you in years, and were I bent to any wanton appetites, you shold justly correct me by fatherly counsell, such as most beautifieth your sacred profession. Beside, I am a Widdow, and you are not ignorant, how requisite a thing honestie is in widdowes. Wherefore, pardon mee (Holy Father:) for, in such manner as you make the motion: I desire you not to love mee, because I neither can or will at any time so affect you.

The Provoste gaining no other grace at this time, would not so give over for this first repulse, but pursuing her still with unbeseeming importunity; many private meanes he used to her by Letters, tokens, and insinuating ambassages; yea, whensoever shee came to the Church, he never ceased his wearisome solicitings. Whereat she growing greatly offended, and perceyving no likelyhood of his desisting; became so tyred with his tedious suite, that she considered with her selfe, how she might dispatch him as he deserved, because she saw no other remedy. Yet shee would not attempte anie thing in this case, without acquainting her Bretheren first therwith. And having tolde them, how much shee was importuned by the Provost, and also what course she meant to take (wherin they both counselled and encouraged her:) within a few daies after, shee went to Church as she was wont to do; where so soone as the Provost espyed her: forthwith he came to her, and according to his continued course, he fell into his amorous courting. She looking upon him with a smiling countenance, and walking aside with him out of any hearing: after he had spent many impertinent speeches, shee (venting foorth manie a vehement sighe) at length returned him this answer.

Reverend Father, I have often heard it saide: That there is not any Fort or Castle, how strongly munited soever it bee; but by continuall assayling, at length (of necessity) it must and will be surprized. Which comparison, I may full well allude to my selfe. For, you having so long time solicited me, one while with affable language, then againe with tokens and entisements, of such prevailing power: as have broken the verie barricado of my former deliberation, and yeelded mee uppe as your prisoner, to be commanded at your pleasure, for now I am onely devoted yours.

Well may you (Gentle Ladies) imagine, that this answere was not a little welcome to the Provost; who, shrugging with conceyte of joy, presently thus replyed. I thanke you Madame Piccarda, and to tell you true, I held it almost as a miracle, that you could stand upon such long resistance, considering, it never so fortuned to mee with anie other. And I have many times saide to my selfe, that if women were made of silver, they hardly could be worth a pennie, because there can scarsely one be found of so good allay, as to endure the test and essay. But let us breake off this frivolous conference, and resolve upon a conclusion; How, when and where we may safely meete together. Worthy Sir, answered Piccarda, your selfe may appoint the time whensoever you please, because I have no Husband, to whom I should render any account of my absence, or presence: but I am not provided of any place.

A pretty while the Provoste stood musing, and at last saide. A place Madame? where can be more privacie, then in your owne house? Alas Sir (quoth she) you know that I have two Gentlemen my brethren, who continually are with me, and other of their friends beside: My house also is not great, wherefore it is impossible to be there, except you could be like a dumbe man, without speaking one word, or making the very least noyse; beside, to remaine in darkenesse, as if you were blinde, and who can be able to endure all these? And yet (without these) there is no adventuring, albeit they never come into my Chamber: but their lodging is so close to mine, as there cannot any word be spoken, be it never so low or in whispering manner, but they heare it very easily. Madame said the Provoste, for one or two nights, I can make hard shift. Why Sir (quoth she) the matter onely remaineth in you, for if you be silent and suffering, as already you have heard, there is no feare at all of safty. Let me alone Madame, replyed the Provoste, I will be governed by your directions: but, in any case, let us begin this night. With all my heart, saide shee. So appointing him how, and when hee should come; hee parted from her, and shee returned home to her house.

Heere I am to tell you, that this Gentlewoman had a servant, in the nature of an old maide, not indued with any well featured face, but instead thereof, she had the ugliest and most counterfeit countenance, as hardly could be seene a worse. She had a wrie mouth, huge great lippes, foule teeth, great and blacke, a monstrous stinking breath, her eyes bleared, and alwayes running, the complexion of her face betweene greene and yellow, as if shee had not spent the Summer season in the Citie, but in the parching Countrey under a hedge; and beside all these excellent parts, shee was crooke backt, poult footed, and went like a lame Mare in Fetters. Her name was Ciuta, but in regard of her flat nose, lying as low as a Beagles, shee was called Ciutazza. Now, notwithstanding all this deformity in her, yet she had a singuler opinion of her selfe, as commonly all such foule Sluts have: in regard whereof, Madame Piccarda calling her aside, thus began.

Ciutazza, if thou wilt doe for me one nights service, I shall bestow on thee a faire new Smocke. When Ciutazza heard her speake of a new Smocke, instantly she answered. Madame, if you please to bestow a new Smocke on me, were it to runne thorow the fire for you, or any businesse of farre greater danger, you onely have the power to command me, and I will doe it. I will not (said Piccarda) urge thee to any dangerous action, but onely to lodge in my bed this night with a man, and give him courteous entertainement, who shall reward thee liberally for it. But have an especiall care that thou speake not one word, for feare thou shouldst be heard by my Brethren, who (as thou knowest) lodge so neere by; doe this, and then demaund thy Smocke of me. Madame (quoth Ciutazza) if it were to lye with sixe men, rather then one; if you say the word, it shall be done.

When night was come, the Provoste also came according to appointment, even when the two brethren were in their lodging, where they easily heard his entrance, as Piccarda (being present with them) had informed them. In went the Provoste without any candle, or making the least noise to be heard, and being in Piccardaes Chamber, went to bed: Ciutazza tarrying not long from him, but (as her Mistresse had instructed her) she went to bed likewise, not speaking any word at all, and the Provoste, imagining to have her there, whom he so highly affected, fell to imbracing and kissing Ciutazza, who was as forward in the same manner to him, and there for a while I intend to leave them.

When Piccarda had performed this hot piece of businesse, she referred the effecting of the remainder to her Brethren, in such sort as it was compacted betweene them. Faire and softly went the two brethren forth of their Chamber, and going to the Market place, Fortune was more favourable to them then they could wish, in accomplishing the issue of their intent. For the heat being somwhat tedious, the Lord Bishop was walking abroad very late, with purpose to visit the Brethren at the Widdowes house, because he tooke great delight in their company, as being good Schollers, and endued with other singular parts beside. Meeting with them in the open Market place, he acquainted them with his determination; whereof they were not a little joyfull, it jumping so justly with their intent.

Being come to the Widdowes house, they passed through a smal nether Court, where lights stood ready to welcome him thither; and entring into a goodly Hall, there was store of good wine and banquetting, which the Bishop accepted in very thankefull manner: and courteous complement being overpassed, one of the Brethren, thus spake. My good Lord, seeing it hath pleased you to honour our poore Widdowed Sisters house with your presence, for which wee shall thanke you while we live: We would intreate one favour more of you, onely but to see a sight which we will shew you. The Lord Bishop was well contented with the motion: so the Brethren conducting him by the hand, brought him into their Sisters Chamber, where the Provoste was in bed with Ciutazza, both soundly sleeping, but enfolded in his armes, as wearied (belike) with their former wantonning, and whereof his age had but little need.

The Courtaines being close drawne about the bed, although the season was exceeding hot, they having lighted Torches in their hands; drew open the Curtaines, and shewed the Bishop his Provoste, close snugging betweene the armes of Ciutazza. Upon a sudden the Provoste awaked, and seeing so great a light, as also so many people about him: shame and feare so daunted him, that hee shrunke downe in the bed, and hid his head. But the Bishop being displeased at a sight so unseemely, made him to discover his head againe, to see whom he was in bed withall. Now the poore Provoste perceiving the Gentlewomans deceite, and the proper hansome person so sweetly embracing him: it made him so confounded with shame, as he had not the power to utter one word: but having put on his cloathes by the Bishops command, hee sent him (under sufficient guard) to his Pallace, to suffer due chastisement for his sinne committed; and afterward he desired to know, by what meanes hee became so favoured of Ciutazza, the whole Historie whereof, the two brethren related at large to him.

When the Bishop had heard all the discourse, highly he commended the wisedome of the Gentlewoman, and worthy assistance of her brethren, who contemning to soile their hands in the blood of a Priest, rather sought to shame him as hee deserved. The Bishop enjoyned him a pennance of repentance for forty dayes after, but love and disdaine made him weepe nine and forty: Moreover, it was a long while after, before he durst be seene abroad. But when he came to walke the streets, the Boyes would point their fingers at him, saying. Behold the Provoste that lay with Ciutazza: Which was such a wearisome life to him, that he became (well neere) distracted in his wits. In this manner the honest Gentlewoman discharged her dutie, and rid her selfe of the Provosts importunity: Ciutazza had a merry night of it, and a new Smocke also for her labour.

THE FIFT NOVELL

GIVING ADMONITION, THAT FOR THE MANAGING OF PUBLIQUE AFFAIRES, NO OTHER PERSONS ARE OR OUGHT TO BE APPOINTED, BUT SUCH AS BE HONEST, AND MEET TO SIT ON THE SEATE OF AUTHORITY.

THREE *pleasant Companions, plaide a merry pranke with a Judge (belonging to the Marquesate of Ancona) at Florence, at such time as he sate on the Bench, and hearing criminall causes.*

NO sooner had Madam Æmillia finished her Novell, wherin, the excellent wisdome of Piccarda, for so worthily punishing the luxurious old Provoste, had generall commendations of the whole Assembly: but the Queene, looking on Philostratus, said. I command you next to supply the place: whereto he made answere, that hee was both ready and willing, and then thus began. Honourable Ladies, the merry Gentleman, so lately remembred by Madame Eliza, being named Maso del Saggio; causeth me to passe over an intended Tale, which I had resolved on when it came to my turne: to report another concerning him, and two men more, his friendly Companions. Which although it may appeare to you somewhat unpleasing, in regard of a little grosse and unmannerly behaviour: yet it will move merriment without any offence, and that is the maine reason why I relate it.

It is not unknowne to you, partly by intelligence from our reverend predecessours, as also some understanding of your owne, that many time have resorted to our City of Florence, Potestates and Officers, belonging to the Marquesate of Anconia; who commonly were men of lowe spirit, and their lives so wretched and penurious, as they rather deserved to be tearmed Misers, then men. And in regard of this their naturall covetousnesse and misery, the Judges would bring also in their company, such Scribes or Notaries, as being paralelde with their Masters: they all seemed like Swaines come from the Plough, or bred up in some Coblers quality, rather then Schollers, or Students of Law.

At one time (above all the rest) among other Potestates and Judges, there came an especiall man, as pickt out of purpose, who was named Messer Niccolao da San Lepidio, who (at the first beholding) looked rather like a Tinker, then any Officer in authority. This hansome man (among the rest) was deputed to heare criminall causes. And, as often it happeneth, that Citizens, although no businesse inviteth them to Judiciall Courts, yet they still resort thither, sometimes accidentally: So it fortuned, that Maso del Saggio, being one morning in search of an especiall friend, went to the Court-house, and being there, observed in what manner Messer Niccolao was seated; who looking like some strange Fowle, lately come forth of a farre Countrey; he began to survay him the more seriously, even from the head to the foot, as we use to say.

And albeit he saw his Gowne furred with Miniver, as also the hood about his necke, a Penne and Inkehorne hanging at his girdle, and one skirt of his Garment longer then the other, with more misshapen sights about him, farre unfitting for a man of so civill profession: yet he spyed one errour extraordinary, the most notable (in his opinion) that ever he had seene before. Namely, a paultry paire of Breeches, wickedly made, and worse worne, hanging downe so lowe as halfe his legge, even as he sate upon the Bench, yet cut so sparingly of the Cloath, that they gaped wide open before, as a wheele-barrow might have full entrance allowed it. This strange sight was so pleasing to him; as leaving off further search of his friend, and scorning to have such a spectacle alone by himselfe: hee went upon another Inquisition; Namely, for two other merry Lads like himselfe, the one being called Ribi, and the other Matteuzzo, men of the same mirth-full disposition as he was, and therefore the fitter for his Company.

After he had met with them, these were his salutations: My honest Boyes, if ever you did me any kindnesse, declare it more effectually now, in accompanying me to the Court-house, where you shall behold such a singular spectacle, as (I am sure) you never yet saw the like. Forthwith they went along altogether, and being come to the Court-house, he shewed them the Judges hansome paire of Breeches, hanging down in such base and beastly manner; that (being as yet farre off from the Bench) their hearts did ake with extreamity of laughter. But when they came neere to the seat whereon Messer Niccolao sate, they plainely perceived, that it was very easie to be crept under, and withall, that the board whereon he set his feet, was rotten and broken, so that it was no difficult matter, to reach it, and pull it downe as a man pleased, and let him fall bare Breecht to the ground. Cheare up your spirits (my hearts) quoth Maso, and if your longing be like to mine; we will have yonder Breeches a good deale lower, for I see how it may be easily done.

Laying their heads together, plotting and contriving severall wayes, which might be the likelyest to compasse their intent: each of them had his peculiar appointment, to undertake the businesse without fayling, and it was to be performed the next morning. At the houre assigned, they met there againe, and finding the Court well filled with people, the Plaintiffes and Defendants earnestly pleading: Matteuzzo (before any body could descry him) was cunningly crept under the Bench, and lay close by the board whereon the Judge placed his feete. Then stept in Maso on the right hand of Messer

Niccolao, and tooke fast hold on his Gowne before; the like did Ribi on the left hand, in all respects answerable to the other. Oh my Lord Judge (cryed Maso out aloud) I humbly intreat you for charities sake, before this pilfering knave escape away from hence; that I may have Justice against him, for stealing my drawing-over stockeings, which he stoutly denyeth, yet mine owne eyes beheld the deed, it being now not above fifteene dayes since, when first I bought them for mine owne use.

Worthy Lord Judge (cryed Ribi, on the other side) doe not beleeve what he saith, for he is a paltry lying fellow, and because hee knew I came hither to make my complaint for a Male or Cloakebag which he stole from me: hee urgeth this occasion for a paire of drawing Stockeings, which he delivered me with his owne hands. If your Lordship will not credit me, I can produce as witnesses, Trecco the Shoemaker, with Monna Grassa the Souse-seller, and he that sweepes the Church of Santa Maria á Verzaia, who saw him when he came posting hither. Maso haling and tugging the Judge by the sleeve, would not suffer him to heare Ribi, but cryed out still for Justice against him, as he did the like on the contrary side.

During the time of this their clamourous contending, the Judge being very willy willing to heare either party: Matteuzzo, upon a signe received from the other, which was a word in Masoes pleading, laide holde on the broken boord, as also on the Judges low-hanging Breech, plucking at them both so strongly, that they fell downe immediately, the Breeches being onely tyed but with one Poynt before. He hearing the boards breaking underneath him, and such maine pulling at his Breeches; strove (as he sate) to make them fast before, but the Poynt being broken, and Maso crying in his eare on the one side, as Ribi did the like in the other; hee was at his wits end to defend himselfe. My Lord (quoth Maso) you may bee ashamed that you doe me not Justice, why will you not heare mee, but wholly lend your eare to mine Adversary? My Lord (said Ribi) never was Libell preferd into this Court, of such a paltry trifling matter, and therefore I must, and will have Justice.

By this time the Judge was dismounted from the Bench, and stood on the ground, with his slovenly Breeches hanging about his heeles: Matteuzzo being cunningly stolne away, and undiscovered by any body. Ribi, thinking he had shamed the Judge sufficiently, went away, protesting, that he would declare his cause in the hearing of a wiser Judge. And Maso forbearing to tugge his Gowne any longer, in his departing, said. Fare you well Sir, you are not worthy to be a Magistrate, if you have no more regard of your honour and honesty, but will put off poore mens suites at your pleasure. So both went severall wayes, and soone were gone out of publike view.

The worshipfull Judge Messer Niccolao stood all this while on the ground; and, in presence of all the beholders, trussed up his Breeches, as if hee were new risen out of his bed: when better bethinking himselfe on the matters indifference, he called for the two men, who contended for the drawing stockings and the Cloake-bag; but no one could tell what was become of them. Whereupon, he rapt out a kinde of Judges oath, saying: I will know whether it be Law or no heere in Florence, to make a Judge sit bare Breecht on the Bench of Justice, and in the hearing of criminall Causes; whereat the chiefe Potestate, and all the standers by laughed heartily.

Within fewe dayes after, he was informed by some of his especiall Friends, that this had never happened to him, but onely to testifie, how understanding the Florentines are, in their ancient constitutions and customes, to embrace, love and honour, honest, discreet worthy Judges and Magistrates; Whereas on the contrary, they as much condemne miserable knaves, fooles, and dolts, who never merit to have any better entertainment. Wherefore, it would be best for him, to make no more enquiry after the parties; lest a worse inconvenience should happen to him.

THE SIXT NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, HOW EASILY A PLAINE AND SIMPLE MAN MAY BE MADE A FOOLE, WHEN HE DEALETH WITH CRAFTY COMPANIONS.

BRUNO *and Buffalmaco, did steale a young Brawne from Calandrino, and for his recovery thereof, they used a kinde of pretended conjuration, with Pilles made of Ginger and strong Malmesey. But instead of this application, they gave him two Pilles of a Dogges Dates, or Dowsets, confected in Alloes, which he received each after the other; by meanes whereof they made him beleeve, that hee had robde himselfe. And for feare they should report this theft to his Wife; they made him to goe buy another Brawne.*

PHILOSTRATUS had no sooner concluded his Novell, and the whole Assembly laughed heartily thereat: but the Queen gave command to Madame Philomena, that shee should follow next in order; whereupon thus shee began. Worthy Ladies, as Philostratus, by calling to memorie the name of Maso del Saggio, hath contented you with another merry Novell concerning him: In the same manner must I intreat you, to remember once againe Calandrino and his subtle Consorts, by a pretty tale which I meane to tell you; how, and in what manner they were revenged on him, for going to seeke the invisible Stone.

Needlesse were any fresh relation to you, what manner of people those three men were, Calandrino, Bruno, and Buffalmaco, because already you have had sufficient understanding of them. And therefore, as an induction to my discourse, I must tell you, that Calandrino had a small Country-house, in a Village some-what neere to Florence, which came to him by the marriage of his Wife. Among other Cattle and Poultry, which he kept there in store, hee had a young Boare readie fatted for Brawne, whereof yearly he used to kill one for his owne provision; and alwaies in the month of December, he and his wife resorted to their village house, to have a Brawne both killed and salted.

It came to passe at this time concerning my Tale, that the Woman being somewhat crazie and sickly, by her Husbands unkinde usage, whereof you heard so lately; Calandrino went alone to the killing of his Boare, which comming to the hearing of Bruno and Buffalmaco, and that the Woman could by no meanes be there: to passe away the time a little in merriment, they went to a friendlie Companion of theirs, an honest joviall Priest, dwelling not farre off from Calandrinoes Countrey house.

The same morning as the Boare was kilde, they all three went thither, and Calandrino seeing them in the Priests companie: bad them all heartily welcome; and to acquaint them with his good Husbandry, hee shewed them his house, and the Boare where it hung. They perceyving it to be faire and fat, knowing also, that Calandrino intended to salt it for his owne store, Bruno saide unto him: Thou art an Asse Calandrino, sell thy Brawne, and let us make merrie with the money: then let thy wife know no otherwise, but that it was stolne from thee, by those theeves which continually haunt country houses, especially in such scattering Villages.

Oh mine honest friends, answered Calandrino, your counsell is not to be followed, neither is my wife so easie to be perswaded: this wer the readiest way to make your house a hell, and she to become the Master-Divell: therefore talke no further, for flatly I will not doe it. Albeit they laboured him very earnestly, yet all proved not to anie purpose: onely he desired them to suppe with him, but in so colde a manner, as they denyed him, and parted thence from him. As they walked on the way, Bruno saide to Buffalmaco. Shall we three (this night) rob him of his Brawne? Yea marry (quoth Buffalmaco) how is it to be done? I have (saide Bruno) alreadie found the meanes to effect it, if he take it not from the place where last we saw it. Let us doe it then (answered Buffalmaco) why should we not do it? Sir Domine heere and we, will make good cheare with it among our selves. The nimble Priest was as forward as the best; and the match being fully agreed on, Bruno thus spake. My delicate Sir Domine, Art and cunning must be our maine helps: for thou knowest Buffalmaco, what a covetous wretch Calandrino is, glad and readie to drink alwaies on other mens expences: let us go take him with us to the Tavern, where the Priest (for his owne honour and reputation) shall offer to make paiment of the whole reckoning, without receiving a farthing of his, whereof he will not be a little joyfull, so shall we bring to passe the rest of the businesse, because there is no body in the house, but onely himselfe: for he is best at ease without company.

As Bruno had propounded, so was it accordingly performed, and when Calandrino perceyved, that the Priest would suffer none to pay, but himselfe, he dranke the more freely; and when there was no neede at all, tooke his Cuppes couragiously one after another. Two or three houres of the night were spent, before they parted from the Taverne, Calandrino going directly home to his house, and instantly to bed, without any other supper, imagining that he had made fast his doore, which (indeede) he left wide open: sleeping soundly, without suspition of any harme intended unto him. Buffalmaco and Bruno went and supt with the Priest, and so soone as supper was ended, they tooke certaine Engines, for their better entering into Calandrinoes house, and so went on to effect theyr purpose. Finding the doore standing readie open, they entered in, tooke the Brawne, carried it with them to the Priests house, and afterward went all to bed.

When Calandrino had well slept after his Wine, he arose in the morning, and being descended downe the staires; finding the street doore wide open, he looked for the Brawne, but it was gone. Enquiring of the neighbours dwelling neere about him, hee could heare no tydings of his Brawne, but became the wofullest man in the world, telling every one that his Brawne was stolne. Bruno and Buffalmaco being risen in the morning, they went to visite Calandrino to heare how he tooke the losse of his Brawne: and hee no sooner had a sight of them, but he called them to him; and with the teares running downe his cheekes, sayde: Ah my deare friendes, I am robde of my Brawne. Bruno stepping closely to him, sayde in his eare: It is wonderfull, that once in thy life time thou canst bee wise. How? answered Calandrino, I speake to you in good earnest. Speake so still in earnest (replied Bruno) and cry it out so loud as thou canst, then let who list beleeve it to be true.

Calandrino stampt and fretted exceedingly, saying: As I am a true man to God, my Prince, and Countrey, I tell thee truly, that my Brawne is stolne. Say so still I bid thee (answered Bruno) and let all the world beleeve thee, if they list to do so, for I will not. Wouldst thou (quoth Calandrino) have me damne my selfe to the divell? I see thou dost not credit what I say: but would I were hanged by the necke, if it be not true, that my Brawne is stolne. How can it possible be, replyed Bruno? Did not I see it in thy house yesternight? Wouldst thou have me beleeve, that it is flowne away? Although it is not flowne away (quoth Calandrino) yet I am certain, that it is stolne away: for which I am weary of my life, because I dare not go home to mine owne house, in regard my wife will never beleeve it; and yet if she should credite it, we are sure to have no peace for a twelvemonths space.

Bruno, seeming as if he were more then halfe sorrowfull, yet supporting still his former jesting humor, saide: Now trust mee Calandrino, if it be so; they that did it are much too blame. If it be so? answered Calandrino, Belike thou wouldst have mee blaspheme Heaven, and all the Saints therein: I tell thee once againe Bruno, that this last night my Brawne was stolne. Be patient good Calandrino, replyed Buffalmaco, and if thy Brawne be stolne from thee, there are means enow to get it againe. Meanes enow to get it againe? said Calandrino, I would faine heare one likely one, and let all the rest go by. I am sure Calandrino, answered Buffalmaco, thou art verily perswaded, that no Theefe came from India, to steale thy Brawne from thee: in which respect, it must needes then be some of thy Neighbours: whom if thou couldst lovingly assemble together, I knowe an experiment to be made with Bread and Cheese, whereby the party that hath it, will quickly be discovered.

I have heard (quoth Bruno) of such an experiment, and helde it to be infallible; but it extendeth onely unto persons of Gentilitie, whereof there are but few dwelling heere about, and in the case of stealing a Brawne, it is doubtfull to invite them, neither can there be any certainty of their comming. I confesse what you say, aunswered Buffalmaco, to be very true: but then in this matter, so nerely concerning us to be done, and for a deare Friend, what is your advice? I would have Pilles made of Ginger, compounded with your best and strongest Malmsey, then let the ordinary sort of people be invited (for such onely are most to be mistrusted) and they will not faile to come, because they are utterly ignorant of our intention. Besides, the Pilles may as well bee hallowed and consecrated, as bread and cheese on the like occasion. Indeede you say true (replyed Buffalmaco) but what is the opinion of Calandrino? Is he willing to have this tryall made, or no? Yes, by all meanes, answered Calandrino, for gladly I would know who hath stolne my Brawne; and your good words have (more then halfe) comforted me already in this case.

Well then (quoth Bruno) I will take the paines to go to Florence, to provide all things necessarie for this secret service; but I must bee furnished with money to effect it. Calandrino had some forty shillings then about him, which he delivered to Bruno, who presently went to Florence, to a frend of his an Apothecarie, of whom he bought a pound of white Ginger, which hee caused him to make uppe in small Pilles: and two other beside of a Dogges-dates or Dowsets, confected all over with strong Aloes, yet well moulded in Sugare, as all the rest were: and because they should the more easily bee knowne from the other, they were spotted with Gold, in verie formall and Physicall manner. He bought moreover, a big Flaggon of the best Malmesey, returning backe with all these things to Calandrino, and directing him in this order.

You must put some friend in trust, to invite your Neighbors (especially such as you suspect) to a breakfast in the morning: and because it is done as a feast in kindnesse, they will come to you the more willingly. This night will I and Buffalmaco take such order, that the Pilles shall have the charge imposed on them, and then wee will bring them hither againe in the morning: and I my selfe (for your sake) will deliver them to your guests, and performe whatsoever is to bee sayde or done. On the next morning, a goodly company being assembled, under a faire Elme before the Church; as well young Florentynes (who purposely came to make themselves merry) as neighbouring Husbandmen of the Village: Bruno was to begin the service, with the Pils in a faire Cup, and Buffalmaco followed him with another Cup, to deliver the wine out of the Flaggon, all the company beeing set round, as in a circle; and Bruno with Buffalmaco being in the midst of them, Bruno thus spake.

Honest friends, it is fit that I should acquaint you with the occasion, why we are thus met together, and in this place: because if anie thing may seeme offensive to you; afterward you shall make no complaint of me. From Calandrino (our loving friend heere present) yesternight there was a new-kild fat Brawne taken, but who hath done the deede, as yet he knoweth not; and because none other, but some one (or more) heere among us, must needs offend in this case: he, desiring to understand who they be, would have each man to receive one of these Pilles, and afterward to drinke of this Wine; assuring you all, that whosoever stole the Brawne hence, cannot be able to swallow the Pill: for it wil be so extreme bitter in his mouth, as it will enforce him to Coughe and spet extraordinarily. In which respect, before such a notorious shame be received, and in so goodly an assembly, as now are heere present: it were much better for him or them that have the Brawne, to confesse it in private to this honest Priest, and I will abstaine from urging anie such publike proofe.

Every one there present answered, that they were well contented both to eate and drinke, and let the shame fall where it deserved; whereupon, Bruno appointing them how they should sit, and placing Calandrino as one among them: he began his counterfeite exorcisme, giving each man a Pill, and Buffalmaco a Cup of Wine after it. But when he came to Calandrino, hee tooke one of them which was made of the Dogges dates or Dowsets, and delivering it into his hand, presently hee put it into his mouth and chewed it. So soone as his tongue tasted the bitter Aloes, he began to coughe and spet extreamly, as being utterly unable, to endure the bitternesse and noysome smell. The other men that had receyved the Pils, beganne to gaze one upon another, to see whose behaviour should discover him; and Bruno having not (as yet) delivered Pils to them all, proceeded on still in his businesse, as seeming not to heare any coughing, till one behinde him, saide. What meaneth Calandrino by this spetting and coughing?

Bruno sodainely turning him about, and seeing Calandrino to cough and spet in such sort, saide to the rest. Be not too rash (honest Friends) in judging of any man, some other matter (then the Pille) may procure this Coughing, wherfore he shall receive another, the better to cleare your beleefe concerning him. He having put the second prepared Pill into his mouth, while Bruno went to serve the rest of the Guests: if the first was exceeding bitter to his taste, this other made it a great deale worse, for teares streamed forth of his eyes as bigge as Cherry-stones, and champing and chewing the Pill, as hoping it would overcome his coughing; he coughed and spette the more violently, and in grosser manner then he did before, nor did they give him any wine to helpe it.

Buffalmaco, Bruno, and the whole company, perceiving how he continued still his coughing and spetting, saide all with one voyce, That Calandrino was the Theefe to him selfe: and gave him manie grosse speeches beside, all departing home unto their houses, very much displeased and angry with him. After they were gone, none remained with him but the Priest, Bruno and Buffalmaco, who thus spake to Calandrino. I did ever thinke, that thou wast the theefe thy selfe, yet thou imputedst thy robbery to some other, for feare we should once drinke freely of thy purse, as thou hast done many times of ours. Calandrino, who had not yet ended his coughing and spetting, sware many bitter Oathes, that his Brawne was stolne from him. Talke so long as thou wilt, quoth Buffalmaco, thy knavery is both knowne and seene, and well thou mayst be ashamed of thy selfe. Calandrino hearing this, grew desperately angry; and to incense him more, Bruno thus pursued the matter.

Heare me Calandrino, for I speake to thee in honest earnest, there was a man in the company, who did eate and drinke heere among thy neighbours, and plainly told me, that thou keptst a young Lad heere to do thee service, feeding him with such victuals as thou couldst spare, by him thou didst send away thy Brawne, to one that bought it of thee for foure Crownes, onely to cousen thy poore wife and us. Canst thou not yet learne to leave thy mocking and scorning? Thou hast forgotte, how thou broughtst us to the plaine of Mugnone, to seeke for black invisible stones: which having found, thou concealedst them to thy selfe, stealing home invisibly before us, and making us follow like fooles after thee.

Now likewise, by horrible lying Oathes, and perjured protestations, thou wouldst make us beleeve, that the Brawne (which thou hast cunningly sold for ready money) was stolne from thee out of thy house, when thou art onely the Theefe to thy selfe, as by that excellent rule of Art (which never faileth) hath plainly, to thy shame, appeared. Wee being so well acquainted with thy delusions, and knowing them perfectly; now do plainly tell thee, that we mean not to be foold any more. Nor is it unknowne to thee, what paines wee have taken, in making this singular peece of proofe. Wherefore we inflict this punishment on thee, that thou shalt bestow on this honest Priest and us, two couple of Capons, and a Flaggon of Wine, or else we will discover this knavery of thine to thy Wife.

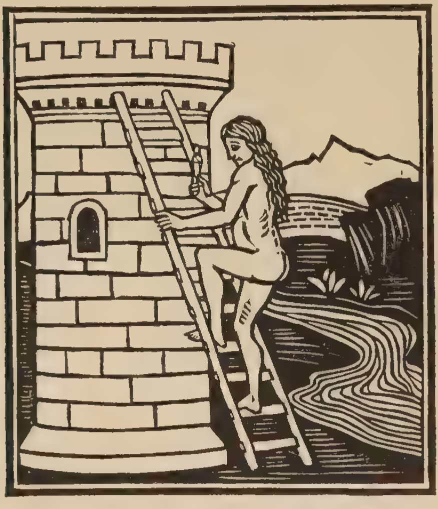
Calandrino perceiving, that all his protestations could winne no credit with them, who had now the Law remaining in their owne hands, and purposed to deale with him as they pleased: apparantly saw, that sighing and sorrow did nothing availe him. Moreover, to fall into his wives tempestuous stormes of chiding, would bee worse to him then racking or torturing: he gladly therefore gave them money, to buy the two couple of Capons and Wine, being heartily contented likewise, that hee was so well delivered from them. So the merry Priest, Bruno, and Buffalmaco, having taken good order for salting the Brawne; closely carried it with them to Florence, leaving Calandrino to complaine of his losse, and well requited, for mocking them with the invisible stones.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

SERVING AS AN ADMONITION TO ALL LADIES AND GENTLEWOMEN, NOT TO MOCK OR SCORNE GENTLEMEN-SCHOLLERS, WHEN THEY MAKE MEANES OF LOVE TO THEM: EXCEPT THEY INTEND TO SEEKE THEIR OWNE SHAME, BY DISGRACING THEM.

A YOUNG *Gentleman being a Scholler, fell in love with a Ladie, named Helena, she being a Widdow, and addicted in affection to another Gentleman. One whole night in cold Winter, she caused the Scholler to expect her comming, in an extreame frost and snow. In revenge whereof, by his imagined Art and skill, he made her to stand naked on the top of a Tower, the space of a whole day, and in the hot moneth of July, to be Sunburnt and bitten with Waspes and Flies.*

GREATLY did the Ladies commend Madame Philomenaes Novell, laughing heartily at poore Calandrino, yet grieving withall, that he should be so knavishly cheated, not onely of his Brawne, but two couple of Capons, and a Flaggon of Wine beside. But the whole discourse being ended; the Queene commanded Madame Pampinea, to follow next with her Novell, and presently she thus began. It hapneth oftentimes (bright beauties) that mockery falleth on him, that intended the same unto another: And therefore I am of opinion, that there is very litle wisedom declared on him or her, who taketh delight in mocking any person. I must needs confesse, that we have smiled at many mockeries and deceits, related in those excellent Novels, which we have already heard: without any due revenge returned, but onely in this last of silly Calandrino. Wherefore, it is now my determination, to urge a kind of compassionate apprehension, upon a very just retribution, happening to a Gentlewoman of our Citie, because her scorne fell deservedly upon her selfe, remaining mocked, and to the perill of her life. Let me then assure you, that your diligent attention may redound to your benefit, because if you keepe your selves (henceforward) from being scorned by others: you shall expresse the greater wisedome, and be the better warned by their mishaps.



As yet there are not many yeares overpast, since there dwelt in Florence, a yong Lady, descended of Noble parentage, very beautifull, of sprightly courage, and sufficiently abounding in the goods of Fortune, she being named Madame Helena. Her delight was to live in the estate of Widdowhood, desiring to match her selfe no more in marriage, because she bare affection to a gallant young Gentleman, whom she had made her private election of, and with whom (having excluded all other amorous cares and cogitations) by meanes of her Waiting-woman, she had divers meetings, and kinde conferences.

It chanced at the verie same time, another young Gentleman of our Citie, called Reniero, having long studied in the Schooles at Paris, returned home to Florence, not to make sale of his Learning and experience, as many doe: but to understand the reason of things, as also the causes and effects of them, which is mervailously fitting for any Gentleman. Being greatly honoured and esteemed of every one, as well for his courteous carriage towards all in generall, as for his knowledge and excellent parts: he lived more like a familiar Citizen, then in the nature of a Courtly Gentleman, albeit he was choisely respected in either estate.

But, as oftentimes it commeth to passe, that such as are endued with the best judgement and understanding in naturall occasions, are soonest caught and intangled in the snares of Love: so fel it out with our Scholler Reniero, who being invited to a solemne Feast, in company of other his especiall Friends; this Lady Helena, attyred in her blacke Garments (as Widowes commonly use to wear) was likewise there a Guest. His eye observing her beauty and gracious demeanour, she seemed in his judgement, to be a Woman so compleate and perfect, as he had never seene her equall before: and therefore, he accounted the man more then fortunate, that was worthy to embrace her in his armes. Continuing this amorous observation of her from time to time, and knowing withall, that rare and excellent things are not easily obtained, but by painefull study, labour, and endeavour: hee resolved with himselfe constantly, to put in practise all his best parts of industry, onely to honour and please her, and attaining to her contentation, it would be the means to winne her love, and compasse thereby his hearts desire.

The yong Lady, who fixed not her eyes on inferiour subjects (but esteemed her selfe above ordinary reach or capacity) could moove them artificially, as curious women well know how to doe, looking on every side about her, yet not in a gadding or grosse manner: for she was not ignorant in such darting glaunces, as proceeded from an enflamed affection, which appearing plainely in Reniero; with a pretty smile, shee said to her selfe. I am not come hither this day in vaine; for, if my judgement faile me not, I thinke I have caught a Woodcocke by the Bill. And lending him a cunning looke or two, queintly caried with the corner of her eye; she gave him a kinde of perswading apprehension, that her heart was the guide to her eye. And in this artificial Schoole-tricke of hers, shee carryed therewith another consideration, to wit, that the more other eyes fedde themselves on her perfections, and were (well-neere) lost in them beyond recovery: so much the greater reason had he to account his fortune beyond comparison, that was the sole master of her heart, and had her love at his command.

Our witty Scholler having set aside his Philosophicall considerations, strove how he might best understand her carriage toward him, and beleeving that she beheld him with pleasing regards; hee learned to know the house where shee dwelt, passing daily by the doore divers times, under colour of some more serious occasions: wherein the Lady very proudly gloried, in regard of the reasons before alleadged, and seemed to affoord him lookes of goode liking. Being led thus with a hopefull perswasion, hee found the meanes to gaine acquaintance with her waiting-woman, revealing to her his intire affection, desiring her to worke for him in such sort with her Lady, that his service might be gracious in her acceptance. The Gentlewoman made him a very willing promise, and immediately did his errand to her Lady; who heard her with no small pride and squemishnesse, and breaking forth into a scornefull laughter, thus she spake.

Ancilla (for so she was named) dost thou not observe, how this Scholler is come to lose all the wit heere, which he studyed so long for in the University of Paris? Let us make him our onely Table argument, and seeing his folly soareth so high, we will feed him with such a dyet as hee deserveth. Yet when thou speakest next with him, tell him, that I affect him more then he can doe me; but it becommeth me to be carefull of mine honour, and to walke with an untainted brow, as other Ladies and Gentlewomen doe: which he is not to mislike, if he be so wise as he maketh shew of, but rather will the more commend me. Alas good Lady lack-wit, little did she understand (faire assembly) how dangerous a case it is [to] deale with Schollers.

At his next meeting with the waiting woman, shee delivered the message, as her Lady had commanded her, whereof poore Reniero was so joyfull: that hee pursued his love-suite the more earnestly, and began to write letters, send gifts, and tokens, all which were still received, yet without any other answere to give hope, but onely in generall, and thus shee dallied with him a long while. In the end, she discovered this matter to her secret chosen friend, who fell suddenly sicke of the head-ake, onely through meere conceit of jealousie: which she perceiving, and grieving to be suspected without any cause, especially by him whom shee esteemed above all other; shee intended to rid him quickely of that Idle disease. And being more and more solicited by the Scholler, she sent him word by her maide

Ancilla, that (as yet) she could find no convenient opportunity, to yeeld him such assurance, as hee should not any way be distrustfull of her love.

But the Feast of Christmas was now neere at hand, which afforded leisures much more hopefull, then any other formerly passed. And therefore, the next night after the first Feasting day, if he pleased to walke in the open Court of her house: she would soone send for him, into a place much better beseeming, and where they might freely converse together.

Now was our Scholler the onely jocond man of the world, and failed not the time assigned him, but went unto the Ladies house, where Ancilla was ready to give him entertainment, conducting him into the base Court, where she lockt him up fast, untill her Lady should send for him. This night shee had privately sent for her friend also, and sitting merrily at supper with him, told him, what welcome she had given the Scholler, and how she further meant to use him, saying. Now Sir, consider with your selfe, what hot affection I beare to him, of whom you became so fondly jealous. The which words were very welcome to him, and made him extraordinarily joyful; desiring to see them as effectually performed, as they appeared to him by her protestations.

Heere you are to understand (Gracious Ladies) that according to the season of the yeare, a great snow had falne the day before, so as the whole Court was covered therewith, and being an extreame frost upon it, our Scholler could not boast of any warme walking, when the teeth quivered in his head with cold, as a Dog could not be more discourteously used: yet hope of enjoying Loves recompence at length, made him to support all this injury with admirable patience.

Within a while after, Madame Helena said to her friend. Walke with me (deare heart) into my Chamber, and there at a secret little window, I shall shew thee what he doth, that drove thee to such a suspition of me, and we shall heare beside, what answere he will give my maide Ancilla, whom I will send to comfort him in his coldnesse.

When she had so said, they went to the appointed chamber window, where they could easily see him, but he not them: and then they heard Ancilla also, calling to him forth of another windowe, saying. Signior Reniero, my Lady is the wofullest woman in the world, because (as yet) she cannot come to you, in regard that one of her brethren came this evening to visite her, and held her with much longer discourse then she expected: whereby she was constrained to invite him to sup with her, and yet he is not gone; but shortly I hope hee will, and then expect her comming presently; till when, she entreateth your gentle sufferance.

Poore Reniero, our over-credulous Scholler, whose vehement affection to Madame Helena, so hood-winkt the sight of his understanding, as he could not be distrustfull of any guilt; returned this answere to Ancilla. Say to your Lady that I am bound in duty, to attend the good houre of her leisure, without so much as the very least prejudicate conceite in me: Neverthelesse, entreat her, to let it bee so soone as she possibly may, because here is miserable walking, and it beginneth againe to snow extreamely. Ancilla making fast the Casement, went presently to bed; when Helena spake thus to her amorous friend. What saist thou now? Doest thou thinke that I loved him, as thou wast afraid of? If I did, he should never walke thus in the frost and snow. So, away went they likewise from their close gazing window, and spent wanton dalliances together, laughing, and deriding (with many bitter taunts and jests) the lamentable condition of poore Reniero.

About the Court walked hee numberlesse times, finding such exercises as he could best devise, to compasse warmth in any manner: no seate or shelter had he any where, either to ease himselfe by sitting downe a while, or keepe him from the snow, falling continually on him, which made him bestow many curses on the Ladies Brother, for his so long tarrying with her, as beleeving him verily to be in the house, or else she would (long before) have admitted his entrance, but therein his hope was meerely deceived. It grew now to be about the houre of midnight, and Helena had delighted her selfe with her friend extraordinarily, til at last, thus she spake to him. What is thine opinion of my amourous Scholler? Which dost thou imagine to be the greatest, either his sense and judgement, or the affection I beare to him? Is not this cold sufferance of his, able to quench the violent heat of his loves extremitie, and having so much snow broth to helpe it? Beleeve me (sweet Lady) quoth her friend, as hee is a man, and a learned Scholler, I pitty that he should bee thus ungently dealt withall: but as he is my rivall and loves enemy, I cannot allow him the least compassion, resting the more confidently assured of your love to me, which I will alwayes esteeme most precious.

When they had spent a long while in this or the like conference, with infinite sweet kisses and embraces intermixed; then she began againe in this manner. Deare love (quoth she) cast thy Cloake about thee, as I intend to doe with my night mantle, and let us step to the little window once more, to see whether the flaming fire, which burned in the Schollers brest (as daily avouched to me in his love letters) be as yet extinct or no. So going to the window againe, and looking downe into the Court; there they saw the Scholler dancing in the snow, to the cold tune of his teeths quivering and chattering, and clapping his armes about his body, which was no pleasing melody to him. How thinkest thou now sweet heart (saide shee) cannot I make a man daunce without the sound of a Taber, or of a Bagpipe? yes beleeve me Lady (quoth he) I plaine perceive you can, and would be very lothe, that you should exercise your cunning on me. Nay, said shee, we will yet delight our selves a little more; let us softly descend downe the stayres, even so farre as to the Court doore: thou shalt not speake a word, but I will talke to him, and heare some part of his quivering language, which cannot choose but bee passing pleasing for us to heare.

Out of the Chamber went they, and descended downe the stayres to the Court doore; where, without opening it, she laide her mouth to a small cranny, and in a low soft kinde of voyce, called him by his name: which the Scholler hearing, was exceeding joyful, as beleeving verily, that the houre of his deliverance was come, and entrance now should be admitted him. Upon the hearing of her voyce, hee stept close to the doore, saying. For charities sake, good Lady, let me come in, because I am almost dead with cold; whereto thus she answered in mocking manner. I make no doubt (my deare friend Reniero) but the night is indifferent colde, and yet somewhat the warmer by the Snowes falling: and I have heard that such weather as this, is tenne-times more extreame at Paris, then heere in our warmer Countrey. And trust me, I am exceeding sorrowfull, that I may not (as yet) open the doore, because mine unhappy brother, who came (unexpected) yester-night to suppe with mee, is not yet gone, as within a short while (I hope) he will, and then shall I gladly set open the doore to you, for I made an excuse to steale a little from him, onely to cheare you with this small kind of comfort, that his so long tarrying might be the lesse offensive to you.

Alas sweet Madame, answered quaking and quivering Reniero, bee then so favourable to me, as to free me from forth this open Court, where there is no shelter or helpe for me, the snow falling still so exceedingly, as a man might easily be more then halfe buried in it: let me but within your doore, and there I will wait your own good leisure. Alas deare Reniero (answered Helena) I dare not doe it, because the doore maketh such a noyse in the opening, as it will be too easily heard by my Brother: but I will goe and use such meanes, as shortly hee shall get him gone, and then I dare boldly give you entrance. Doe so good Madame, replyed Reniero, and let there be a faire fire made ready, that when I am within, I may the sooner warme my selfe; for I am so strangely benummed with colde, as well-neere I am past all sence of feeling.

Can it be possible (quoth Helena) that you should be so benummed with colde? Then I plainely perceive, that men can lye in their love letters, which I can shew under your own hand, how you fryed in flames, and all for my love, and so have you written to me in every letter. Poore credulous women are often thus deluded, in beleeving what men write and speake out of passion: but I will returne backe to my Brother, and make no doubt of dispatch, because I would gladly have your Company.

The amourous Friend to Helena, who stood by all this while, laughing at the Schollers hard usage, returned up againe with her to her Chamber, where they could not take a jote of rest, for flouting and scorning the betrayed Scholler. As for him poore man, hee was become like the Swanne, coldly chattering his teeth together, in a strange new kinde of harmony to him. And perceiving himselfe to be meerely mocked, he attempted to get open the doore, or how he might passe forth at any other place; but being no way able to compasse it, he walked up and downe like an angry Lyon, cursing the hard quality of the time, the discourtesie of the Lady, the over-tedious length of the night; but (most of all) his owne folly and simplicity, in being so basely abused and gulde. Now began the heat of his former affection to Helena, altered into as violent a detestation of her; Yea, extremity of hatred in the highest degree; beating his braines, and ransacking every corner of invention, by what meanes he might best be revenged on her, which now he more earnestly desired to effect, then to enjoy the benefit of her love, or to be embraced betweene her armes.

After that the sad and discomfortable night had spent it selfe, and the break of day was beginning to appeare; Ancilla the waiting-woman, according as she was instructed by her Lady, went downe and opened the Court doore, and seeming exceedingly to compassionate the Schollers unfortunate night of sufferance, saide unto him.

Alas courteous Gentleman, in an unblessed houre came my Ladyes brother hither yesternight, inflicting too much trouble upon us, and a grievous time of affliction to you. But I am not ignorant, that you being vertuous, and a judicious Scholler, have an invincible spirit of pacience, and sufficient understanding withall; that what this night could not affoord, another may make a sound amends for. This I can and dare sufficiently assure you, that nothing could be more displeasing to my Lady, neither can she well be quieted in her mind: untill she have made a double and treble requitall, for such a strange unexpected inconvenience, whereof she had not the very least suspition.

Reniero swelling with discontentment, yet wisely clouding it from open apprehension, and knowing well enough, that such golden speeches and promises, did alwaies savour of what intemperate spleene would more lavishly have vented foorth, and therefore in a modest dissembling manner; without the least shew of any anger, thus he answered.

In good sadnesse Ancilla, I have endured the most miserablest night of cold, frost and snow, that ever any poore Gentleman suffered; but I know well enough, your Lady was not in any fault thereof, neither meriteth to be blamed, for in her owne person (as being truely compassionate of my distresse) she came so farre as the doore of this Court, to excuse her selfe, and comfort mee. But as you saide, and very well too, what hath failed this night, another hereafter may more fortunately performe: in hope whereof, commend my love and duteous service to her, and (what else remaineth mine) to your gentle selfe.

So our halfe frozen Scholler, scarcely able to walke upon his legges, returned home, (so well as hee could) to his owne lodging; where, his spirits being grievously out of order, and his eyes staring gastly through lacke of sleepe: he lay downe on his bed, and after a little rest, he found himselfe in much worse condition then before, as meerely taken lame in his armes and his legges. Whereupon he was inforced to send for Phisitions, to be advised by their councell, in such an extremity of cold received. Immediately, they made provision for his healthes remedie (albeit his nerves and sinewes could very hardly extend themselves) yet in regard he was yong, and Summer swiftly drawing on; they had the better hope of affecting his safty, out of so great and dangerous a cold.

But after he was become almost well and lusty againe, hee used to be seldome seene abroad for an indifferent while; concealing his intended revenge secret to himselfe, yet appearing more affectionate to Madame Helena, then formerly he had beene.

Now, it came to passe (within no long while after) that Fortune being favourable to our injured Scholler, prepared a new accident, wherby he might fully effect his harts desire. For the lusty yong Gallant, who was Madame Helenaes deare darling and delight, and (for whose sake) she dealt so inhumanely with poore Reniero: became weary of her amourous service, and was falne in liking of another Lady, scorning and disdaining his former Mistresse; whereat shee grew exceedingly displeased, and began to languish in sighes and teares.

But Ancilla her waiting-woman, compassionating the perilous condition of her Lady, and knowing no likely meanes whereby to conquer this oppressing melancholly, which shee suffered for the losse of her hearts chosen friend: at length she began to consider, that the Scholler still walked daily by the doore, as formerly hee was wont to doe, and (by him) there might some good be done.

A fond and foolish opinion overswayed her, that the Scholler was extraordinarily skilfull in the Art of Nigromancy, and could thereby so over-rule the heart of her lost friend, as hee should bee compelled to love her againe, in as effectuall manner as before; herewith immediately she acquainted her Lady, who being as rashly credulous, as her maide was opinionative (never considring, that if the Scholler had any experience in Negromancy, hee would thereby have procured his owne successe) gave releefe to her surmise, in very Joviall and comfortable manner, and entreated her in all kindnes, to know of him, whether he could worke such a businesse, or no, and (upon his undertaking to effect it) shee would give absolute assurance, that (in recompence thereof) he should unfainedly obtaine his hearts desire. Ancilla was quicke and expeditious, in delivering this message to discontented Reniero, whose soule being ready to mount out of his body, onely by conceit of joy; chearefully thus he said within himselfe. Gracious Fortune! how highly am I obliged to thee for this so great a favour? Now thou hast blest me with a happy time, to be justly revenged on so wicked a woman, who sought the utter ruine of my life, in recompence of the unfaigned affection I bare her. Returne to thy Lady (quoth he) and saluting her first on my behalfe, bid her to abandon all care in this businesse; for, if her amourous Friend were in India, I would make him come (in meere despight of his heart) and crave mercy of her for his base transgression. But concerning the meanes how, and in what manner it is to bee done, especially on her owne behalfe: I will impart it to her so soone as she pleaseth: faile not to tell her so constantly from me, with all my utmost paines at her service.

Ancilla came iocondly home with her answere, and a conclusion was set downe for their meeting together at Santa Lucia del prato, which accordingly was performed, in very solemne conference between them. Her fond affection had such power over her, that shee had forgot, into what peril she brought his life, by such an unnatural nightwalke: but disclosed all her other intention to him, how loth she was to lose so deare a friend, and desiring him to exercise his utmost height of skil, with large promises of her manifold favours to him, whereto our Scholler thus replyed.

Very true it is Madam, that among other studies at Paris, I learned the Art of Negromancy, the depth whereof I am as skilfull in, as anie other Scholler whatsoever. But, because it is greatly displeasing unto God, I made a vow never to use it, either for my selfe, or anie other. Neverthelesse, the love I beare you is of such power, as I know not well how to denie, whatsoever you please to command me: in which respect, if in doing you my very best service, I were sure to bee seized on by all the divels: I will not faile to accomplish your desire, you onely having the power to command me. But let me tell you Madame, it is a matter not so easie to be performed, as you perhaps may rashly imagine, especially, when a Woman would repeale a man to love her, or a man a woman: because, it is not to be done, but by the person whom it properly concerneth. And therefore it behoveth, that such as would have this businesse effected, must be of a constant minde, without the least scruple of feare: because it is to be accomplished in the darke night season, in which difficulties I doe not know, how you are able to warrant your selfe, or whether you have such courage of spirit, as (with boldnes) to adventure.

Madame Helena, more hot in pursuite of her amorous contentment, then any way governed by temperate discretion, presently thus answered. Sir, Love hath set such a keene edge on my unconquerable affection, as there is not any daunger so difficult, but I dare resolutely undertake it, for the recovery of him, who hath so shamefullie refused my kindnesse: wherefore (if you please) shew mee, wherein I must be so constant and dreadlesse. The Scholler, who had (more then halfe) caught a right Ninnyhammer by the beake, thus replyed. Madame, of necessity I must make an image of Tin, in the name of him whom you desire to recall. Which when I have sent you, the Moone being then in her full, and your selfe stript starke naked: immediately after your first sleepe, seaven times you must bathe your selfe with it in a swift running River. Afterward, naked as you are, you must climbe up upon some tree, or else upon an uninhabited house top, where standing dreadlesse of any perill, and turning your face to the North, with the Image in your hand, seaven times you must speake such wordes, as I will deliver to you in writing.

After you have so often spoken them, two goodly Ladies (the very fairest that ever you beheld) wil appeare unto you, very graciously saluting you, and demanding what you would have them to performe for you. Safely you may speake unto them, and orderly tel them what you desire: but be very careful, that you name not one man insted of another. When you have uttered your mind, they wil depart from you, and then you may descend againe, to the place where you did leave your garments, which having putte on, then returne to your house. And undoubtedly, before the midst of the next night following, your friend wil come in teares to you, and humbly crave your pardon on his knees; beeing never able afterward to be false to you, or leave your Love for any other whatsoever.

The Lady hearing these words, gave very setled beleefe to them, imagining unfainedly, that shee had (more then halfe) recovered her friend already, and held him embraced between her armes: in which jocond perswasion, the chearful blood mounted up into hir cheekes, and thus she replyed. Never make you any doubt Sir, but that I can sufficiently performe whatsoever you have said, and am provided of the onely place in the world, where such a weighty businesse is to be effected. For I have a Farme or dairy house, neere adjoyning to the vale of Arno, and closely bordering upon the same River. It beeing now the moneth of July, the most convenientest time of all the yeare to bathe in; I can bee the easier induced thereunto.

Moreover, there is hard by the Rivers side a smal Tower or Turret uninhabited; whereinto few people do sildome enter, but onely Heardsmen or Flocke-keepers, who ascend uppe (by the helpe of a wodden Ladder) to a Tarrasse on the top of the saide Tower, to looke all about for their beasts, when they are wandred astray: it standing in a solitary place, and out of the common way or resort. There dare I boldly adventure to mount up, and with the invincible courage of a wronged Lady (not fearing to looke death himself in the face) do al that you have prescribed, yea, and much more, to recover my deare lost Lover againe, whom I value equal with my owne Life.

Reniero, who perfectly knew both the Dairy Farme, and the old smal Turret, not a little joyful, to heare how forward shee was to shame her selfe, answered in this manner. Madame, I was never in those parts of the Country, albeit they are so neere to our City, and therfore I must needs be ignorant, not onely of your Farme, but the Turret also. But if they stand in such convenient manner as you have described, all the world could not yeelde the like elsewhere, so apt and sutable to your purpose: wherefore, with such expedition as possibly I can use, I will make the Image, and send it you, as also the charme, verie fairely written. But let me entreate you, that when you have obtayned your hearts desire, and are able to judge truely of my love and service: not to be unmindfull of me, but (at your best leysure) to performe what you have with such protestations promised; which shee gave him her hand and faith to do, without any impeach or hinderance: and so parting, she returned home to her house.

Our over-joyed Scholler, applauding his happy Starres, for furthering him with so faire a way to his revenge; immagining that it was already halfe executed, made the Image in due forme, and wrote an old Fable, insted of a Charme; both which he sent to the Lady, so soone as he thought the time to be fitting: and this admonition withall, that the Moone being entering into the full, without any longer delay, she might venter on the businesse the next night following; and remaine assured to repossesse her friend. Afterward for the better pleasing of himselfe, he went secretly attended, onely by his servant, to the house of a trusty frend of his, who dwelt somwhat neere to the Turret, there to expect the issue of this Lady-like enterprize. And Madam Helena accompanied with none but Ancilla, walked on to her dairy Farme, where the night ensuing, pretending to take her rest sooner then formerly she used to doe, she commanded Ancilla to go to bed, referring her selfe to her best liking.

After she had slept her first sleepe (according to the Schollers direction) departing softly out of her chamber, she went on towards the ancient Tower, standing hard by the river of Arno, looking every way heedfully about hir, least she should be spied by any person. But perceiving hir selfe to be so secure as she could desire; putting off all her garments, she hid them in a small brake of bushes: afterward, holding the Image in hir hand, seven times she bathd hir body in the river, and then returned with it to the Tower. The Scholler, who at the nights closing up of day, had hid himselfe among the willowes and other trees, which grew very thick about the Tower, saw both hir going and returning from the River, and as she passed thus naked by him, he plainly perceyved, that the nights obscurity could not cloud the delicate whitenes of hir body, but made the Starres themselves to gaze amorously on her, even as if they were proud to behold her bathing, and (like so many twinkling Tapers) shewed hir in emulation of another Diana. Now, what conflicts this sight caused in the mind of our Scholler, one while, quenching his hatefull spleen towards hir, al coveting to imbrace a piece of such perfection: another while, thinking it a purchase fit for one of Cupids soldiers, to seize and surprize hir uppon so faire an advantage, none being neere to yeild her rescue: in the fiery triall of such temptations, I am not able to judge, or to say, what resistance flesh and blood could make, being opposed with such a sweet enemy.

But he well considering what she was, the greatnes of his injury, as also how, and for whom: he forgot all wanton allurements of Love, scorning to entertaine a thought of compassion, continuing constant in his resolution, to let her suffer, as he himselfe had done. So, Helena being mounted up on the Turret, and turning her face towards the North; she repeated those idle frivolous words (composed in the nature of a charme) which shee had received from the Scholler. Afterward, by soft and stealing steps, hee went into the old Tower, and tooke away the Ladder, whereby she ascended to the Tarras, staying and listening, how shee proceeded in her amorous exorcisme.

Seven times she rehearsed the charme to the Image, looking still when the two Ladies would appeare in their likenesse, and so long she held on her imprecations (feeling greater cold, then willinglie she would have done) that breake of day began to shew it selfe, and halfe despairing of the Ladies comming, according as the Scholler had promised, she said to her selfe: I much misdoubt, that Reniero hath quitted me with such another peece of night-service, as it was my lucke to bestow on him: but if he have done it in that respect, hee was but ill advised in his revenge, because the night wants now three parts of the length, as then it had: and the cold which he suffered, was far superior in quality to mine, albeit it is more sharp now in the morning, then all the time of night it hath bin.

And, because day-light should not discover her on the Tarrasse, she went to make her descent downe againe: but finding the Ladder to be taken away, and thinking how her publike shame was now inevitable, her heart dismayed, and shee fell downe in a swoune on the Tarras: yet recovering her senses afterward, her greefe and sorrow exceeded all capacity of utterance. For, now she became fully perswaded, that this proceeded from the Schollers malice, repenting for her unkinde usage towards him, but much more condemning her selfe, for reposing any trust in him, who stood bound (by good reason) to be her enemy.

Continuing long in this extreame affliction, and surveighing all likely meanes about her, whereby she might descend from the Tarras, whereof she was wholly disappointed: she began to sighe and weepe exceedingly, and in this heavy perplexity of spirit, thus shee complained to her selfe. Miserable and unfortunate Helena, what will be saide by thy Bretheren, Kindred, Neighbours, and generallie throughout all Florence, when they shall know, that thou wast founde heere on this Turret, starke naked? Thine honourable carriage, and honesty of life, heeretofore free from a thought of suspition, shall now be branded with detestation; and if thou wouldst cloud this mishappe of thine, by such lies and excuses, as are not rare amongst women: yet Reniero that wicked Scholler, who knoweth all thy privy compacting, will stand as a thousand witnesses against thee, and shame thee before the whole City, so both thine honor and loved friend are lost for ever.

Having thus consulted with her selfe, many desperate motions entred her minde, to throw her selfe headlong from off the Tarras; till better thoughts wone possession of her soule. And the Sunne being risen, shee went to every corner of the Tarras, to espye any Lad come abroad with his beasts, by whom she might send for her waiting-woman. About this instant, the Scholler who lay sleeping (all this while) under a bush, suddenly awaking; saw her looke over the wall, and she likewise espyed him; whereupon hee said unto her. Good morrow Madame Helena, What? are the Ladies come yet or no? Helena hearing his scorning question, and grieving that hee should so delude her: in teares and lamentations, she intreated him to come neere the Tower, because she desired to speake with him. Which courtesie he did not deny her, and she lying groveling upon her brest on the Tarras, to hide her body that no part thereof might be seene, but her head; weeping, she spake thus to him.

Reniero, upon my credit, if I gave thee an ill nights rest, thou hast well revenged that wrong on me; for, although wee are now in the moneth of July, I have beene plagued with extremity of colde (in regard of my nakednesse) even almost frozen to death: beside my continuall teares and lamenting, that folly perswaded me to beleeve thy protestations, wherein I account it well-neere miraculous, that mine eyes should be capable of any sight. And therefore I pray thee, not in respect of any love which thou canst pretend to beare me; but for regard of thine owne selfe, being a Gentleman and a Scholler, that this punishment which thou hast already inflicted upon me, may suffice for my former injuries towards thee, and to hold thy selfe revenged fully, as also permit my garments to be brought me, that I may descend from hence, without taking that from me, which afterward (although thou wouldst) thou canst never restore me, I meane mine honour. And consider with thy selfe, that albeit thou didst not injoy my company that unhappy night, yet thou hast power to command me at any time whensoever, with making many diversities of amends, for one nights offence only committed. Content thy selfe then good Reniero, and as thou art an honest gentleman, say thou art sufficiently revenged on me, in making me dearely confesse mine owne errour. Never exercise thy malice upon a poore weake woman, for the Eagle disdaineth to pray on the yeelding Dove: and therefore in meere pitty, and for manhoods sake, be my release from open shame and reproch.

The Scholler, whose envious spleene was swolne very great, in remembring such a malicious cruelty exercised on him, beholding her to weepe and make such lamentations; found a fierce conflict in his thoughts, betweene content and pitty. It did not a little joy and content him, that the revenge which he so earnestly desired to compasse, was now by him so effectually inflicted. And yet (in meere humanity) pitty provoked him, to commisserate the Ladies distressed condition: but clemency being over-weake to withstand his rigor, thus he replied. Madam Helena, if mine entreaties (which, to speake truly, I never knew how to steepe in tears, nor wrap up my words in sugar Candie, so cuningly as you women know how to do) could have prevailed, that miserable night, when I was well-neere frozen to death with cold, and meerly buried with snow in your Court, not having anie place of rescue or shelter; your complaints would now the more easily over-rule me. But if your honor in estimation, bee now more precious to you then heretofore, and it seemeth so offensive to stand there naked: convert your perswasions and prayers to him, in whose armes you were that night imbraced, both of your triumphing in my misery, when poor I, trotted about your Court, with the teeth quivering in my head, and beating mine armes about my body, finding no compassion in him, or you. Let him bring thee thy Garments, let him come helpe thee down with the Ladder, and let him have the care of thine honour, on whom thou hast bene so prodigall heretofore in bestowing it, and now hast unwomanly throwne thy selfe in perill, onely for the maintenance of thine immodest desires.

Why dost thou not call on him to come helpe thee? To whom doeth it more belong, then to him? For thou art his, and he thine. Why then shold any other but he help thee in this distresse? Call him (foole as thou art) and try, if the love he beareth thee, and thy best understanding joyned with his, can deliver thee out of my sottish detaining thee. I have not forgot, that when you both made a pastime of my misery, thou didst demand of him, which seemed greatest in his opinion, either my sottish simplicity, or the love thou barest him. I am not now so liberall or courteous, to desire that of thee, which thou wouldst not grant, if I did request it: No, no, reserve those night favours for thy amorous friend, if thou dost escape hence alive to see him againe. As for my selfe, I leave thee freely to his use and service: because I have sufficiently payde for a womans falshood, and wisemen take such warning, that they scorne to bee twice deceived, and by one woman. Proceed on stil in thy flattering perswasions, terming me to be a Gentleman and a Scholler, thereby to win such favor from me, that I should think thy villany toward me, to be already sufficiently punished. No, treacherous Helena, thy blandishments cannot now hoodwink the eies of my understanding, as when thou didst out-reach me with thy disloyall promises and protestations. And let me now tell thee plainely, that all the while I continued in the Universitie of Paris, I never attained unto so perfect an understanding of my selfe, as in that one miserable night thou diddest enstruct mee. But admit, that I were enclined unto a mercifull and compassionate minde, yet thou art none of them, on whome milde and gracious mercy should any way declare her effects. For, the end of pennance among savage beasts, such as thou art, and likewise of due vengeance, ought to be death: whereas among men, it should suffice according to thine owne saying. Wherefore, in regard that I am neither an Eagle, nor thou a Dove, but rather a most venomous Serpent: I purpose with my utmost hatred, and as an ancient enemy to all such as thou art, to make my revenge famous on thee.

I am not ignorant, that whatsoever I have already done unto thee, cannot properly be termed revenge, but rather chastisement; because revenge ought alwayes to exceede the offence, which (as yet) I am farre enough from. For, if I did intend to revenge my wrongs, and remembred thy monstrous cruelty to me: thy life, if I tooke it from thee, and an hundred more such as thy selfe, were farre insufficient, because in killing thee, I should kill but a vile inhumane beast, yea, one that deserved not the name of a Woman. And, to speake truely, Art thou any more, or better (setting aside thy borrowed haire, and painted beauty, which in few yeares will leave thee wrinkled and deformed) then the basest beggarly Chamber-stuffe that can bee? Yet thou soughtest the death of a Gentleman and Scholler as (in scorne) not long since, thou didst terme me: whose life may hereafter be more beneficiall unto the world, then millions of such as thou art, to live in the like multiplicity of ages. Therefore, if this anguish be sensible to thee, learne what it is to mocke men of apprehension, and (amongst them especially) such as are Schollers: to prevent thy falling hereafter into the like extremity, if it be thy good lucke to escape out of this.

It appeareth to me, that thou art verie desirous to come downe hither on the ground; the best counsell that I can give thee, is to leape downe headlong, that by breaking thy necke (if thy fortune be so faire) thy life and lothsome qualities ending together, I may sit and smile at thy deserved destruction. I have no other comfort to give thee, but only to boast my happinesse, in teaching thee the way to ascend that Tower, and in thy descending downe (even by what means thy wit can best devise) make a mockery of me, and say thou hast learned more, then all my Schollership could instruct thee.

All the while as Reniero uttered these speeches, the miserable Lady sighed and wept very grievously, the time running on, and the Sunne ascending higher and higher; but when she heard him silent, thus she answered. Unkinde and cruell man, if that wretched night was so greevous to thee, and mine offence appeared so great, as neither my youth, beautie, teares, and humble intercessions, are able to derive any mercy from thee; yet let the last consideration moove thee to some remorse: namely, that I reposed new confidence in thee (when I had little or no reason at all to trust thee) and discovered the integritie of my soule unto thee, whereby thou didst compasse the meanes, to punish me thus deservedly for my sinne. For, if I had not reposed confidence in thee, thou couldst not (in this maner) have wrought revenge on me, which although thou didst earnestly covet, yet my rash credulitie was thy onely helpe. Asswage then thine anger, and graciously pardon me, wherein if thou wilt be so mercifull to me, and free me from this fatall Tower: I do heere faithfully promise thee, to forsake my most false and disloyall friend, electing thee as my Lord and constant Love for ever.

Moreover, although thou condemnest my beauty greatly, esteeming it as a trifle, momentary, and of slender continuance; yet, such as it is (being comparable with any other womans whatsoever) I am not so ignorant, that were there no other reason to induce liking thereof: yet men in the vigour of their youth (as I am sure you think your selfe not aged) do hold it for an especiall delight, ordained by nature for them to admire and honour. And notwithstanding all thy cruelty extended to mee, yet I cannot be perswaded, that thou art so flinty or Ironhearted, as to desire my miserable death, by casting my selfe headlong downe (like a desperate madde woman) before thy face, so to destroy that beuty, which (if thy Letters lyed not) was once so highly pleasing in thine eyes. Take pitty then on mee for charities sake, because the Sunne beginneth to heate extreamely: and as over-much colde (that unhappy night) was mine offence, so let not over-violent warmth be now my utter ruine and death.

The Scholler, who (onely to delight himselfe) maintained this long discoursing with her, returned her this answere. Madame, you did not repose such confidence in me, for any good will or affection in you towards me, but in hope of recovering him whom you had lost; wherein you merit not a jot of favour, but rather the more sharpe and severe infliction. And whereas you inferre, that your over-rash credulity, gave the onely meanes to my revenge: Alas! therein you deceive your selfe; for I have a thousand crochets working continually in my brain, whereby to entrap a wiser creature then a woman, yet veiled all under the cunning cloake of love, but sauced with the bitter Wormewood of hate. So that, had not this hapned as now it doth, of necessity you must have falne into another: but, as it hath pleased my happy stars to favour mee therein, none could proove more to your eternall scandall and disgrace, then this of your owne devising; which I made choise of, not in regard of any ease to you, but onely to content my selfe.

But if all other devises els had failed, my pen was and is my prevayling Champion, where-with I would have written such and so many strange matters, concerning you in your very dearest reputation; that you should have curst the houre of your conception, and wisht your birth had bin abortive. The powers of the pen are too many and mighty, wherof such weake wits as have made no experience, are the lesse able to use any relation. I sweare to you Lady, by my best hopes, that this revenge which (perhappes) you esteeme great and dishonourable, is no way compareable to the wounding Lines of a Penne, which can carracter downe so infinite infamies (yet none but guilty and true taxations) as will make your owne hands immediate instruments, to teare the eyes from forth your head, and so bequeath your after dayes unto perpetuall darkenesse.

Now, concerning your lost lover, for whose sake you suffer this unexpected pennance; although your choise hath proved but bad, yet still continue your affection to him: in regard that I have another Ladie and Mistresse, of higher and greater desert then you, and to whome I will continue for ever constant. And whereas you thinke, the warme beames of the Sunne, will be too hot and scorching for your nice bodie to endure: remember the extreame cold which you caused mee to feele, and if you can intermixe some part of that cold with the present heat, I dare assure you, the Sun (in his highest heate) will be far more temperate for your feeling.

The disconsolate Lady perceiving, that the Schollers wordes savoured of no mercy, but rather as coveting her desperate ending; with the teares streaming downe her cheekes, thus she replied. Wel Sir, seeing there is no matter of worth in me, whereby to derive any compassion from you: yet for that Ladies sake, whom you have elected worthy to enjoy your love, and so farre excelleth mee in Wisedome; vouchsafe to pardon mee, and suffer my garments to be brought me, wherewith to cover my nakednesse, and so to descend downe from this Tower, if it may stand with your gentle Nature to admit it.

Now beganne Reniero to laughe very heartily, and perceiving how swiftly the day ran on in his course, he saide unto her. Beleeve me Madame Helena, you have so conjured me by mine endeered Ladie and Mistresse, that I am no longer able to deny you; wherefore, tell me where your garments are, and I will bring them to you, that you may come downe from the Turret. She beleeving his promise, tolde him where she had hid them, and Reniero departing from the Tower, commanded his servant, not to stirre thence: but to abide still so neere it, as none might get entrance there till his returning. Which charge was no sooner given to his man, but hee went to the house of a neere neighboring friend, where he dined well, and afterward laid him downe to sleepe.

In the meane while, Madame Helena remaining still on the Tower, began to comfort her selfe with a little vaine hope, yet sighing and weeping incessantly, seating her selfe so well as shee could, where any small shelter might yeelde the least shade, in expectation of the Schollers returning: one while weeping, then againe hoping, but most of all despairing, by his so long tarrying away with her Garments; so that beeing over-wearied with anguish and long watching, she fell into a little slumbering. But the Sunne was so extreamly hot, the houre of noone being already past, that it meerly parched her delicate body, and burnt her bare head so violently: as not onely it seared all the flesh it touched; but also cleft and chinkt it strangely, beside blisters and other painfull scorchings in the flesh which hindred her sleeping, to help her self (by all possible means) waking. And the Turret being covered with Lead, gave the greater addition to her torment; for, as she removed from one place to another, it yeelded no mitigation to the burning heate, but parched and wrinkled the flesh extraordinarily, even as when a piece of parchment is throwne into the fire, and recovered out againe, can never be extended to his former forme.

Moreover, she was so grievously payned with the head-ake, as it seemed to split in a thousand pieces, whereat there needed no great marvaile, the Lead of the Turret being so exceedingly hot, that it affoorded not the least defence against it, or any repose to qualifie the torment: but drove her still from one place to another, in hope of ease, but none was there to be found.

Nor was there any winde at all stirring, whereby to asswage the Sunnes violent scalding, or keepe away huge swarmes of Waspes, Hornets, and terrible byting Flyes, which vexed her extreamely, feeding on those parts of her body, that were rifte and chinkt, like crannies in a mortered wall, and pained her like so many points of pricking Needles, labouring still with her hands to beate them away, but yet they fastned on one place or other, and afflicted her in grievous manner, causing her to curse her owne life, hir amorous friend, but (most of all) the Scholler, that promised to bring her Garments, and as yet returned not. Now began she to gaze upon every side about her, to espy some labouring Husbandmen in the fields, to whom she might call or cry out for helpe, not fearing to discover her desperate condition: but Fortune therein also was adverse to her, because the heats extreamity, had driven all the village out of the fields, causing them to feede their Cattle about theyr owne houses, or in remote and shadie Valleyes: so that shee could see no other creatures to comfort her, but Swannes swimming in the River of Arno, and wishing her selfe there a thousand times with them, for to coole the extreamity of her thirst, which so much the more encreased, onely by the sight thereof, and utterly disabled of having any.

She saw beside in many places about her, goodly Woods, fayre coole shades, and Country houses here and there dispersed; which added the greater violence to hir affliction, that her desires (in all these) could no way be accomplished. What shall I say more concerning this disastrous Lady? The parching beames of the Sunne above her, the scalding heat of the Lead beneath her, the Hornets and Flyes everie way stinging her, had made such an alteration of her beautifull bodie: that, as it checkt and controlled the precedent nights darkenesse, it was now so metamorphosed with rednesse, yea, and blood issuing forth in infinite places, as she seemed (almost) loathsome to looke on, continuing still in this agonie of torment, quite voyde of all hope, and rather expecting death, then any other comfort.

Reniero, when some three houres of the afternoone were overpast, awaked from sleeping: and remembring Madame Helena, he went to see in what estate she was; as also to send his servant unto dinner, because he had fasted all that day. She perceyving his arrivall, being altogether weake, faint, and wonderously over-wearied, she crept on her knees to a corner of the Turret, and calling to him, spake in this manner. Reniero, thy revenge exceedeth al manhoode and respect: For, if thou wast almost frozen in my Court, thou hast roasted me all day long on this Tower, yea, meerly broyled my poore naked bodie, beside starving mee thorough want of Food and drinke. Be now then so mercifull (for manhoods sake) as to come uppe hither, and inflict that on me, which mine owne hands are not strong enough to do, I meane the ending of my loathed and wearisome life, for I desire it beyond all comfort else, and I shall honour thee in the performance of it. If thou deny me this gracious favour; at least send me uppe a glasse of Water, onely to moisten my mouth, which my teares (being all meerly dried up) are not able to doe, so extreame is the violence of the Sunnes burning heate.

Well perceived the Scholler, by the weaknesse of her voyce, and scorching of her body by the Suns parching beames, that shee was brought now to great extremity: which sight, as also her humble intercession, began to touch him with some compassion, nevertheles, thus he replied. Wicked woman, my hands shal be no means of thy death, but make use of thine owne, if thou be so desirous to have it: and as much water shalt thou get of me to asswage thy thirst, as thou gavest me fire to comfort my freezing, when thou wast in the luxurious heat of thy immodest desires, and I wel-neere frozen to death with extremity of cold. Pray that the Evening may raine downe Rosewater on thee, because that in the River of Arno is not good enough for thee: for as little pitty doe I take on thee now, as thou didst extend compassion to me then.

Miserable Woman that I am, answered Helena; Why did the heavens bestow beautie on mee, which others have admired and honoured, and yet (by thee) is utterly despised? More cruell art thou then any savage Beast; thus to vexe and torment mee in such mercilesse manner. What greater extreamity couldst thou inflict on me, if I had bin the destruction of all thy Kindred, and lefte no one man living of thy race? I am verily perswaded, that more cruelty cannot be used against a Traitor, who was the subversion of an whole Cittie, then this tyranny of thine, roasting me thus in the beames of the Sun, and suffering my body to be devoured with Flies, without so small a mercie, as to give mee a little coole water, which murtherers are permitted to have, being condemned by Justice, and led to execution: yea Wine also, if they request it.

But, seeing thou art so constant in thy pernitious resolve, as neither thine owne good Nature, nor this lamentable sufferance in me, are able to alter thee: I will prepare my self for death patiently, to the end, that Heaven may be mercifull to my soul, and reward thee justly, according to thy cruelty. Which words being ended, she withdrew her selfe towards the middest of the Tarras, despairing of escaping (with life) from the heates violence; and not once onely, but infinite times beside (among her other grievous extreamities) she was ready to dye with drought, bemoaning incessantly her dolorous condition.

By this time the day was well neere spent, and night beganne to hasten on apace: when the Scholler (immagining that he afflicted her sufficiently) tooke her Garments, and wrapping them up in his mans Cloake, went thence to the Ladies house, where he found Ancilla the Waiting-woman sitting at the doore, sad and disconsolate for her Ladies long absence, to whom thus he spake. How now Ancilla? Where is thy Lady and Mistris? Alas Sir (quoth she) I know not. I thought this morning to have found her in her bed, as usually I was wont to do, and where I left her yesternight at our parting: but there she was not, nor in any place else of my knowledge, neyther can I imagine what is become of her, which is to me no meane discomfort.

But can you (Sir) say any thing of her? Ancilla, said he, I would thou hadst bin in her company, and at the same place where now she is, that some punishment for thy fault might have falne uppon thee, as already it hath done on her. But beleeve it assuredly, that thou shalt not freely escape from my fingers, till I have justly paide thee for thy paines, to teach thee to abuse any Gentleman, as thou didst me.

Having thus spoken, hee called to his servant, saying. Give her the Garments, and bid her go looke her Lady, if she will. The Servingman fulfilled his Masters command, and Ancilla having receyved her Ladies cloaths, knowing them perfectly, and remembring (withall) what had bin said: she waxed very doubtfull, least they had slaine her, hardly refraining from exclaiming on them, but that greefe and heavie weeping overcame her; so that uppon the Schollers departing, she ranne in all hast with the garments towardes the Tower.

Upon this fatall and unfortunate day to

Madame Helena, it chanced, that a Clowne or Countrey Peazant belonging to her Farme or Dairy house, having two of his young Heyfers wandred astray, and he labouring in diligent search to finde them: within a while after the Schollers departure, came to seeke them in Woods about the Tower, and, notwithstanding all his crying and calling for his beasts, yet he heard the Ladies greevous moanes and lamentations. Wherefore, he cryed out so lowd as he could, saying: Who is it that mourneth so aloft on the Tower? Full well she knew the voyce of her peazant, and therefore called unto him, and sayd in this maner.

Go (quoth she) I pray thee for my Waiting-woman Ancilla, and bid her make some meanes to come up hither to me. The Clowne knowing his Lady, sayde. How now Madame? Who hath carried you up there so high? Your Woman Ancilla hath sought for you all this day, yet no one could ever have immagined you to bee there. So looking about him, he espyed the two sides of the Ladder, which the Scholler had pulled in sunder; as also the steppes, which he had scattered thereabout; placing them in due order againe as they should bee, and binding them fast with Withies and Willowes.

By this time Ancilla was come thither, who so soone as shee was entred into the Tower, could not refrain from teares and complaints, beating her hands each against other, and crying out. Madam, Madam, my deare Lady and Mistresse! Alas, Where are you? So soone as she heard the tongue of Ancilla, she replyed (so well as she could) saying: Ah my sweet Woman, I am heere aloft uppon the Tarras; weepe not, neyther make any noyse, but quickely bring me some of my Garments. When shee heard her answer in such comfortable maner, she mounted up the Ladder, which the peazant had made very firme and strong, holding it fast for her safer ascending; by which meanes she went up on the Tarras. Beholding her Ladie in so strange a condition, resembling no humane body, but rather the trunke of a Tree halfe burned, lying flat on her face, naked, scorched and strangely deformed: shee beganne to teare the lockes of her owne hayre, raving and raging in as pittifull manner, as if her Ladie had beene quite dead. Which storming tempest, Madame Helena soone pacified, entreating her to use silence, and helpe to put on her garments.

Having understood by her, that no one knew of her being there, but such as brought her cloathes, and the poore peazant, attending there still to do her any service: shee became the better comforted, entreating them by all meanes, that it might bee concealed from any further discovery, which was on eyther side, most faithfullie protested.

The poore Clowne holpe to beare downe his Lady uppon his backe, because the Ladder stood not conveniently enough for her descending, neither were her limbes plyable for her owne use, by reason of their rifts and smarting. Ancilla following after, and being more respective of her Lady, then her owne security in descending, missing the step in the midst of the Ladder, fell downe to the ground, and quite brake her legge in the fall, the paine whereof was so greevous to her, that she cried and roared extraordinarily, even like a Lyon in the desert.

When the Clowne had set his Lady safe on a faire green banke, he returned to see what the waiting woman ayled, and finding her leg to be quite broken: he caried her also to the same banke, and there seated her by her Lady: who perceiving what a mischance had hapned, and she (from whom she expected her onely best helpe) to bee now in far greater necessity her selfe: shee lamented exceedingly, complaining on Fortunes cruel malice toward her, in thus heaping one misery upon another, and never ceasing to torment her, especially now in the conclusion of all, and when shee thought all future perils to be past.

Now was the Sun upon his setting, when the poore honest country-man, because darke night should not overtake them, conducted the Lady home to his owne house: and gaining the assistance of his two brethren and wife, setting the waiting-woman in a Chaire, thither they brought her in like manner. And questionles, there wanted no diligence and comfortable language, to pacifie the Ladyes continuall lamentations. The good wife, led the Lady into hir own poore lodging, where (such cates as they had to feede on) lovingly she set before her: conveying her afterward into her owne bed, and taking such good order, that Ancilla was carried in the night time to Florence, to prevent all further ensuing danger, by reason of her legs breaking.

Madame Helena, to colour this misfortune of her owne: as also the great mishap of her woman: forged an artificiall and cunning tale, to give some formall apparance of hir being in the Tower, perswading the poore simple Country people, that in a straunge accident of thunder and lightning, and by the illusions of wicked spirits, all this adventure hapned to her. Then Physitians were sent for; who, not without much anguish and affliction to the Ladie (by reason of her fleshes flaying off, with the Medicines and Emplaysters applyed to the body) was glad to suffer whatsoever they did, beside falling into a very dangerous Feaver; out of which she was not recovered in a long while after, but continued in daily dispayre of her life; beside other accidents hapning in her time of Physicke, utterly unavoydable in such extreamities: and hardly had Ancilla her legge cured.

By this unexpected pennance imposed on Madame Helena, she utterly forgot her amorous friend; and (from thence forward) carefully kept her selfe from fond loves allurements, and such scornfull behaviour, wherein she was most disorderly faulty. And Reniero the Scholler, understanding that Ancilla had broken her leg, which he reputed as a punishment sufficient for her, held himselfe satisfyed, because neither the Mistresse nor her Maide, could now make any great boast, of his nights hard entertainment, and so concealed all matters else.

Thus a wanton-headed Lady, could finde no other subject to worke her mocking folly on, but a learned Scholler, of whom shee made no more respect, then any other ordinary man. Never remembring, that such men are expert (I cannot say all, but the greater part of them) to helpe the frenzie of foolish Ladies, that must injoy their loose desires, by Negromancy, and the Divelles meanes. Let it therefore (faire Ladies) be my loving admonition to you, to detest all unwomanly mocking and scorning, but more especiallie to Schollers.

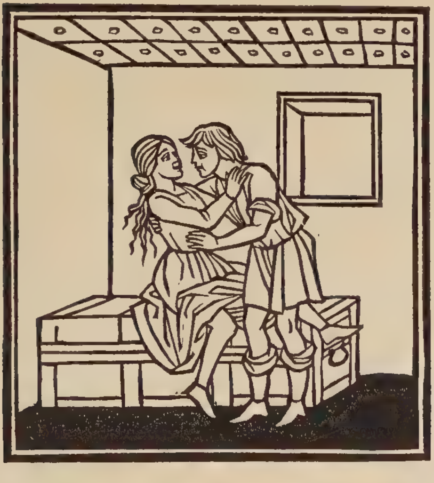
THE EIGHT NOVELL

WHEREIN IS APPROVED, THAT HE WHICH OFFERETH SHAME AND DISGRACE TO HIS NEIGHBOUR; MAY RECEIVE THE LIKE INJURY (IF NOT IN WORSE MANNER) BY THE SAME MAN.

Two *neere dwelling Neighbours, the one beeing named Spineloccio Tavená, and the other Zeppa di Mino, frequenting each others company daily together; Spinelloccio Cuckolded his Friend and Neighbour. Which happening to the knowledge of Zeppa, he prevailed so well with the Wife of Spinelloccio, that he being lockt up in a Chest, he revenged his wrong at that instant, so that neyther of them complained of his misfortune.*

GREEVOUS, and full of compassion, appeared the hard Fortunes of Madame Helena to be, having much discontented, and (well-neere) wearied all the Ladies in hearing them recounted. But because they were very justly inflicted upon her, and according as (in equity) shee had deserved, they were the more moderate in their commisseration: howbeit, they reputed the Scholler not onely over-obstinate, but also too strict, rigorous and severe. Wherefore, when Madame Pampinea had finished hir Novell, the Queene gave command to Madame Fiammetta, that she should follow next with her discourse; whereto shee shewing obedience, thus beganne.

Because it appeareth in my judgement (faire Ladyes) that the Schollers cruelty hath much displeased you, making you more melancholly then this time requireth: I holde it therefore very convenient, that your contristed spirits should be chearfully revived, with matter more pleasing and delightfull. And therefore, I mean to report a Novell of a certaine man, who tooke an injury done him, in much milder manner, and revenged his wrong more moderately, then the furious incensed Scholler did. Whereby you may comprehend, that it is sufficient for any man, and so he ought to esteeme it, to serve another with the same sawce, which the offending party caused him first to taste of: without coveting any stricter revenge, then agreeth with the quality of the injury received.



Know then (Gracious assembly) that, as I have heretofore heard, there lived not long since in Sienna, two young men, of honest parentage and equall condition, neither of the best, nor yet the meanest calling in the City: the one being named Spinelloccio Tavena, and the other tearmed Zeppa di Mino, their houses Neighbouring together in the streete Camollia. Seldome the one walked abroade without the others Company, and their houses allowed equall welcome to them both; so that by outward demonstrations, and inward mutuall affection, as far as humane capacity had power to extend, they lived and loved like two Brethren, they both beeing wealthy, and married unto two beautifull women.

It came to passe, that Spinelloccio, by often resorting to the house of Zeppa, as well in his absence, as when he abode at home; beganne to glance amorous looks on Zeppaes wife, and pursued his unneighbourly purpose in such sort: that hee being the stronger perswader, and she (belike) too credulous in beleeving, or else over-feeble in resisting; from private imparlance, they fell to action; and continued their close fight a long while together, unseene and without suspition, no doubt to their equall joy and contentment.

But, whether as a just punishment, for breaking so loving a league of friendship and neighbour-hood, or rather a fatall infliction, evermore attending on the closest Cuckoldry, their felicity still continuing in this kinde: it fortuned on a day, Zeppa abiding within doors, contrary to the knowledge of his wife, Spinelloccio came to enquire for him, and she answering (as she verily supposed) that he was gon abroad: uppe they went both together into the Hall, and no bodie being there to hinder what they intended, they fell to their wonted recreation without any feare, kissing and embracing as Lovers use to do.

Zeppa seeing all this, spake not one word, neither made any noise at all; but kept himselfe closely hidden, to observe the yssue of this amorous conflict. To be briefe, he saw Spinelloccio goe with his wife into the Chamber, and make the doore fast after them, whereat he could have beene angry, which he held to be no part of true wisedome. For he knew well enough, that to make an out crie in this case, or otherwise to reveale this kinde of injury, it could no way make it lesse, but rather give a greater addition of shame and scandall: he thought this no course for him to take; wiser considerations entred his braine, to have this wrong fully revenged, yet with such a discreete and orderly carriage, as no neighbours knowledge should by any meanes apprehend it, or the least signe of discontent in himselfe blabbe it, because they were two dangerous evils.

Many notable courses wheeled about his conceit, every one promising fairely, and ministring meanes of formall apparance, yet one (above the rest) wonne his absolute allowance, which he intended to prosecute as best he might. In which resolution, he kept still very close, so long as Spinelloccio was with his Wife; but hee being gone, he went into the Chamber, where he found his wife, amending the forme of her head attyre, which Spinelloccio had put into a disordred fashion. Wife (quoth he) what art thou doing? Why? Do you not see Husband? answered she. Yes that I do wife, replied Zeppa, and something else happened to my sight, which I could wish that I had not seene. Rougher Language growing betweene them, of his avouching, and her as stout denying, with defending her cause over-weakely, against the manifest proofes both of eye and eare: at last she fell on her knees before him, weeping incessantly, and no excuses now availing, she confest her long acquaintance with Spinelloccio, and most humbly entreated him to forgive her. Uppon the which penitent confession and submission, Zeppa thus answered.

Wife, if inward contrition be answerable to thy outward seeming sorrow, then I make no doubt, but faithfully thou dost acknowledge thine owne evill dooing: for which, if thou expectest pardon of me; determine then to fulfill effectually, such a busines as I must enjoyne, and thou performe. I command thee to tell Spinelloccio, that to morrow morning, about nine of the clocke, we being both abroad walking, he must finde some apt occasion to leave my company, and then come hither to visit thee. When he is here, sodainly will I returne home, and upon thy hearing of my entraunce: to save his owne credite, and thee from detection, thou shalt require him to enter this Chest, untill such time as I am gone forth againe; which he doing, for both your safeties, so soon as he is in the chest, take the key and locke him up fast. When thou hast effected this, then shall I acquaint thee with the rest remaining, which also must be done by thee, without dread of the least harme to him or thee, because there is no malicious meaning in me, but such as (I am perswaded) thou canst not justly mislike. The wife, to make some satisfaction for her offence committed, promised that she would performe it, and so she did.

On the morrow morning, the houre of nine being come, when Zeppa and Spinelloccio were walking abroad together, Spinelloccio remembring his promise unto his Mistresse, and the clocke telling him the appointed houre, hee saide to Zeppa. I am to dine this day with an especiall friend of mine, who I would be loath should tarry for my comming; and therefore holde my departure excused. How now? answered Zeppa, the time for dinner is yet farre enough off, wherefore then should we part so soone? Yea but Zeppa, replied Spinelloccio, wee have weighty matters to confer on before dinner, which will require three houres space at the least, and therefore it behoveth me to respect due time.

Spinelloccio being departed from Zeppa (who followed faire and softly after him) being come to the house, and kindly welcommed by the wife: they were no sooner gone up the staires, and entering in at the Chamber doore; but the Woman heard her Husband cough, and also his comming up the staires. Alas deare Spinelloccio (quoth she) what shall we do? My Husband is comming uppe, and we shall be both taken tardie, step into this Chest, lye downe there and stirre not, till I have sent him forth againe, which shall be within a very short while. Spinelloccio was not a little joyfull for her good advice; downe in the Chest lay he, and she lockt him in: by which time Zeppa was entred the Chamber. Where are you Wife? said he, (speaking so loud, as hee in the Chest might heare him) What, is it time to go to dinner? It will be anon Sir, answered she, as yet it is overearly; but seeing you are come, the more hast shall be made, and every thing will be ready quickly.

Zeppa, sitting downe upon the Chest, wherein Spinelloccio lay not a little affrighted, speaking stil aloud, as formerly he did: Come hither Wife (quoth he) how shall we do for some good companie to dine with us? Mine honest kinde neighbour Spinelloccio is not at home, because he dineth forth to day with a deare friend of his, by which meanes, his wife is left at home alone: give her a call out at our Window, and desire her to come dine with us: for we two can make no merry Musicke, except some more come to make up the consort.

His Wife being very timorous, yet diligent to doe whatsoever he commanded, so prevailed with the Wife of Spinelloccio: that she came to them quickely, and so much the rather, because her Husband dined abroad. Shee being come up into the Chamber, Zeppa gave her most kinde entertainment, taking her gently by the hand, and winking on his Wife, that she should betake her selfe to the kitchin, to see dinner speedily prepared, while he sat conversing with his neighbour in the Chamber.

His wife being gone, he shut the doore after her; which the new-come Neighbour perceyving, she sayde. Our blessed Lady defend me. Zeppa, What is your meaning in this? Have you caused me to come hither to this intent? Is this the love you beare to Spinelloccio, and your professed loyalty in friendshippe? Zeppa, seating her downe on the Chest, wherein her Husband was inclosed, entreating her patience, thus began. Kinde and loving Neighbor, before you adventure too farre in anger, vouchsafe to heare what I shall tell you.

I have loved, and still doe love, Spinelloccio as my brother, but yesterday (albeit he knoweth it not) I found, the honest trust I reposed in him, deserved no other, or better recompence, but even to be bold with my wife, in the selfesame manner as I am, and as hee ought to do with none but you. Now, in regard of the love which I beare him, I intend to be no otherwise revenged on him, but in the same kinde as the offence was committed. He hath bin more then familiar with my wife. I must borrow the selfe-same courtesie of you, which in equity you cannot deny mee, weighing the wrong you have sustained by my wife. Our injuries are alike, in your Husband to me, and in my wife to you: let then their punishment and ours be alike also; as they, so we; for in this case there can be no juster revenge.

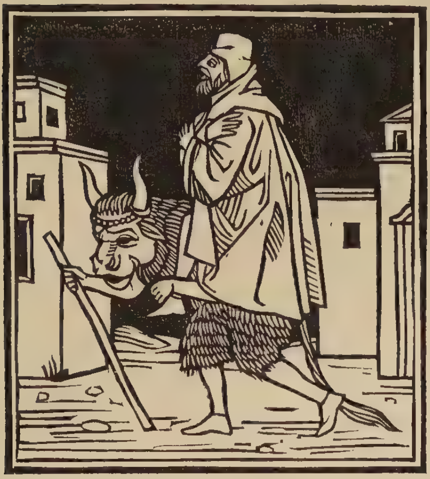
The Woman hearing this, and perceiving the manifolde confirmations thereof, protested (on solemne oath) by Zeppa; hir beliefe grew setled, and thus she answered. My loving neighbor Zeppa, seeing this kinde of revenge is (in meere justice) imposed on mee, and ordained as a due scourge, as well to the breach of friendship and neighbourhood, as abuse of his true and loyall wife: I am the more willing to consent: alwaies provided, that it be no imbarrement of love betweene your wife and mee, albeit I haue good reason to alledge, that she began the quarrell first: and what I do is but to right my wrong, as any other woman of spirit would do: Afterwards, we may the more easily pardon one another. For breach of peace (answered Zeppa) between my wife and you, take my honest word for your warrant. Moreover, in requitall of this favour to mee, I will bestowe a deare and precious Jewell on you, excelling all the rest which you have beside.

In delivering these words, he sweetly kissed and embraced her, as she sat on the Chest wherein her husband lay: now, what they did else beside, in recompence of the wrong received, I leave to your imagination, as rather deserving silence, then immodest blabbing. Spinelloccio, being all this while in the Chest, hearing easily all the words which Zeppa had uttered, the answer of his wife, as also what Musicke they made over his head: you may guesse in what a case he was, his heart being ready to split with rage, and, but that hee stood in feare of Zeppa, he would have railde and exclaimed on his wife, as thus hee lay shut up in the Chest. But entering into better consideration, that so great an injury was first begun by himselfe, and Zeppa did no more, then in reason and equity he might well do (having evermore carried himselfe like a kinde neighbour and frend towards him, without the least offer of distaste) he faithfully resolved, to be a firmer friend to Zeppa then formerly hee had bin, if it might be embraced and accepted.

Delights and pleasures, be they never so long in contenting and continuance, yet they come to a period and conclusion at last: So Zeppa, having ended his amorous combate, and over the head of his perfidious friend, thought himselfe sufficiently revenged. But now, in consideration of a further promise made on the bargaine; Spinelloccioes wife challengeth the Jewel, then which kind of recompence, nothing can be more welcom to women. Heereupon, Zeppa calling for his owne wife, commanded her to open the Chest; which shee did, and he merrily smiling, saide. Well wife, you have given mee a Cake insted of bread, and you shal lose nothing for your labour. So Spinelloccio comming forth of the Chest, it requireth a better witte then mine, to tell you, which of them stood most confounded with shame, either Spinelloccio seeing Zeppa, and knowing well enough what he had done: or the woman beholding her husband, who easily heard all their familiar conference, and the action thereupon so deservedly performed.

See neighbour, is not this your dearest Jewell? Having kept it awhile in my wives custody; according to my promise, here I deliver it you. Spinelloccio being glad of his deliverance out of the Chest, albeit not a little ashamed of himselfe; without using many impertinent words, saide. Zeppa, our wrongs are equally requited on each other, and therefore I allow thy former speeches to my Wife, that thou wast my friend, as I am the like to thee, and so I pray thee let us still continue. For nothing else is now to bee divided betweene us, seeing we have shared alike in our wives, which none knowing but our selves, let it be as closely kept to our selves. Zeppa was wel pleased with the motion, and so all foure dined lovingly together, without any variance or discontentment. And thence forward, each of the Women had two Husbands, as either Husband enjoyed two Wives, without further contention or debate.

THE NINTH NOVELL



WHEREIN IS APPROVED, THAT TITLES OF HONOUR, LEARNING, AND DIGNITY, ARE NOT ALWAYES BESTOWNE ON THE WISEST MEN.

MAESTRO *Simone, an ydle-headed Doctor of Physicke, was throwne by Bruno and Buffalmaco, into a common Leystall of Filth: The Physitian fondly beleeving, that (in the night time) he should bee made one of a new created Company, who usually went to see wonders at Corsica; and there in the Leystall they left him.*

AFTER that the Ladies had a while considered, on the communication betweene the two Wives of Sienna, and the falshood in friendship of their Husbands: the Queene, who was the last to recount her Novell, without offering injurie to Dioneus, began to speake thus.

The reward for a precedent wrong committed, which Zeppa retorted upon Spinelloccio, was answerable to his desert, and no more then equity required, in which respect, I am of opinion, that such men ought not to be over-sharpely reproved, as do injurie to him, who seeketh for it, and justly should have it, althogh Madam Pampinea (not long since) avouched the contrary. Now, it evidently appeareth, that Spinelloccio well deserved what was done to him, and I purpose to speake of another, who needs would seeke after his owne disgrace. The rather to confirme my former speeches, that they which beguile such wilfull foolish men; are not to bee blamed, but rather commended. And he unto whom the shame was done, was a Physitian, which came from Bologna to Florence; and returned thither againe like unto a Beast, notoriously baffulled and disgraced.

It is a matter well knowne to us, and (almost) observed day by day, that divers of our Citizens, when they returne from their studying at Bologna: one becommeth an Advocate, another a Physitian, and a third a Notarie, with long and large gowns, some of Scarlet, and hoods furred with Minever, beside divers other great apparances, succeeding effectually daily in their severall kinds. Among whom, there returned (not long since) thence, one Master Simon da Villa, more rich in possessions left him by his parents, then anie knowledge thereto obtained: yet cloathed in Scarlet, with his Miniver hood, and styled a Doctor of Physicke, which title hee onely bestowed on himselfe, and tooke a goodly house for his dwelling, in the street which wee commonly call La via del Cocomero. This Master Doctor Simon, being thus newly come thither, among other notable qualities in him, had one more especial then any of the rest, namely, to know the names and conditions of such persons, as daily passed by his doore, and what professions they were of, wherby any likelyhood might be gathered of needing his helpe, and being his patients, observing them all with very vigilant care.

But, among all the rest by him thus warily noted, he most observed two Painters, of whom we have heeretofore twice discoursed, Bruno and Buffalmaco, who walked continually together, and were his neere dwelling neighbors. The matter which most of al he noted in them, was; that they lived merrily, and with much lesse care, then any else in the Cittie beside, and verily they did so in deede. Wherefore, he demanded of divers persons, who had good understanding of them both, of what estate and condition they were. And hearing by every one, that they were but poore men and Painters: he greatly mervailed, how it could be possible for them, that they should live so jocondly, and in such poverty. It was related to him further beside, that they were men of a quicke and ingenious apprehension, whereby hee politikely imagined, that theyr poore condition could not so well maintaine them; without some courses else, albeit not publiquely knowne unto men, yet redounding to their great commoditie and profite. In which regard, he grew exceeding desirous, by what meanes he might becom acquainted, and grow into familiarity with them both, or any of them, at the least: wherein (at the length) he prevailed, and Bruno proved to be the man.

Now Bruno plainly perceiving (within a short while of this new begun acquaintance) that the Physitian was a Loggerhead, and meerely no better then a Gregorian Animall: he beganne to have much good pastime with him, by telling him strange and incredible Tales, such as none but a Coxcombe would give credit too; yet they delighted Doctor Dunce extraordinarily, and Brunoes familiarity was so highly pleasing to him, that he was a daily guest at dinner and supper with him, and hee was not meanly proud of enjoying his company. One day, as they sate in familiar conference together, he told Bruno that he wondred not a little at him and Buffalmaco, they being both so poore people, yet lived far more jovially then Lords, and therefore desired to understand, by what secret meanes they compassed such mirthful maintenance. Bruno, hearing the Doctors demaund, and perceiving that it savoured more of the foole, then any the very least taste of wisedome: smiled unto himselfe, and determined to returne him such an answere, as might be fitting for his folly, whereupon, thus he replied.

Beleeve me Master Doctor, I would not impart to many people, what private helpes we have for our maintenance: but yet I dare boldly acquaint you therewith, in regard you are one of our most intimate friends, and of such secrecie, as (I know) you will not reveale it to any. True it is, that mine honest neighbor and my selfe, do leade our lives in such merry manner as you see, and better then all the world is aware of, for I cannot imagine you to bee so ignorant, but are certainly perswaded: that if we had no better means, then our poore manuall trade and profession; we might sit at home with bread and water, and be nothing so lively spirited as wee are. Yet Sir, I would not have you to conceive, that wee do eyther rob or steale, or use any other unlawfull courses: onely we travayle to Corsica, from whence we bring (without the least prejudice to anie other) all things we stand in need of, or whatsoever wee can desire. Thus do we maintaine our selves well and honestly, and live in this mirthfull disposition.

Master Doctor hearing this Discourse, and beleeving it constantly, without any further instruction or intelligence: became possessed with verie much admiration, and had the most earnest desire in the world, to know what this Travailing to Corsica might meane: entreating Bruno with very great instances, to tell him what it was, and made many protestations never to disclose it to anie one. How now Master Doctor? answered Bruno, What a strange motion do you make to mee? It is too great a secret, which you desire to know, yea, a matter of mine owne ruine, and an utter expulsion out of this Worlde, with condemnation into the mouth of Lucifer da San Gallo, if any man whatsoever should know it from me, wherefore I pray you to urge it no more. O my deer and honest neighbour Bruno (quoth the Doctor) assure thy selfe upon my soul, that whatsoever thou revealest to me, shall be under seale from all, but onely our selves. Fie, fie Master Doctor, answered Bruno, you are too pressing and importunate. So sitting smiling to himselfe, shaking his head, and beating his breast, as if hee were in some straunge distraction of minde, stamping with his feete, and beating his Fiste oftentimes on the Table, at last he started uppe, and spake in this manner.

Ah Master Doctor, the love I beare to your capricious and rarely circumcised experience, and likewise the confidence I repose in your scrutinous taciturnitie, are both of such mighty and prevailing power; as I cannot conceale any thing from you, which you covet to know. And therefore, if you wil sweare unto me by the crosse of Monteson, that never (as you have already faithfully promised) you will disclose a secret so admirable; I will relate it unto you, and not otherwise. The Doctor sware, and sware againe, and then Bruno thus began.

Know then my learned and judicious Doctor, that it is not long time since, when there lived in this Citie of ours, a man very excellent in the Art of Nigromancie, who named himselfe Michale Scoto, because he was a Scottishman borne, of many woorthy Gentlemen (very few of them being now living) hee was much honoured and respected. When he grew desirous to depart from hence, upon their earnest motion and entreaty; he left here two of his Schollers behinde him, men of absolute skill and experience: giving them especial charge and command, to do all possible services they could devise, for those Gentlemen who had so highly honoured him. The two famous Schollers, were very helpefull to those Gentlemen, in divers of their amorous occasions, and verie many other matters besides.

Not long after, they finding the Citie, and behaviour of the people sufficiently pleasing to them; they resolved on their continuance heere, entering into a league of love and friendshippe with divers, never regarding, whether they were Gentlemen, or no, or distinguishing the poore from the rich: but only in being conforme to their complexions, sociable and fit for friendship.

They created a kinde Society, consisting of about five and twenty men, who should meete together twice in a moneth, and in a place reputed convenient for them: where being so assembled, every man uttered his minde to those two Schollers, in such cases as they most desired, to have wherwith they were all satisfied the self-same night. It came so to passe, that Buffalmaco and I, grew into acquaintance with those two worthy Schollers, and our private familiarity together proved so prosperous, that we were admitted into the same Society, and so have ever since continued. Now Sir, I am to tell you matter deserving admiration, and which (in very good judgements) would seeme to exceed all beleefe.

For, at every time when we were assembled together: you are not able to imagine, what sumptuous hangings of Tapistrie, did adorne the Hall where we sate at meate, the Tables covered in such Royall manner, waited on by numberless Noble and goodly attendants, both Women and Men, serving readily, at each mans command of the company. The Basins, Ewers, Pots, Flaggons, and all the vessels else which stood before, and for the service of our diet, being composed onely of Gold and Silver, and out of no worse did we both eate and drinke: the viands being very rare and dainty, abounding in plenty and variety, according to the appetite of everie person, as nothing could be wished for, but it was instantly obtained.

In good sadnesse Sir, I am not able to remember and tell you (within the compasse of a thousand yeares) what, and how manie severall kindes of Musicall Instruments, were continually played on before us; what multiplicity of Waxe lights burned in all partes of the roomes; neither the excessive store of rich Drugs, Marchpanes, Comfites, and rare Banquetting stuffe, consumed there at one Feasting, wherein there wanted no bounty of the best and purest wines. Nor do I (Master Doctor) repute you so weakly witted, as to think, that in the time of our being thus assembled there, any of us al were cloathed in such simple and meane Garments, as ordinarily are worne in the streets on mens bodies, or any so silly as the verie best you have: No Sir, not any one man among us, but appeared by his apparrell, equall to the greatest Emperour on the earth, his robe most sumptuously imbroidered with precious stones, Pearles, and Carbuncles, as all the world affoordeth not the like. But above all the rest, the delights and pleasures there, are beyond my capacity to expresse, or (indeede) any comparison: as namely, store of goodly and beautifull women, brought thither from all parts of the world; alwayes provided, if men bee desirous of their company: but for your easier comprehension, I will make some briefe relation of them to you, according as I heard them there named.

There is the great Lady of Barbanicchia; the Queene of Baschia; the Wife to the great Soldane, the Empresse of Osbeccho; the Ciancianfera of Norniera; the Semistante of Berlinzona; and the Scalpedra of Narsia. But why do I breake my braine, in numbering up so many to you? All the Queenes of the world are there, even so farre as to the Schinchimurra of Prester John, that hath a horne in the midst of her posteriores, albeit not visible to every eye.

Now I am further to tell you, that after we have tasted a Cup of precious Wine, fed on a few delicate Comfits, and danced a dance or two to the rare Musicke: every one taketh a Lady by the hand, of whom he pleaseth to make his election, and she conducteth him to her Chamber, in very grave and gracious manner. Concerning the Chambers there, each of them resembleth a Paradise to looke on, they are so faire and goodly; and no lesse odorifferous in smell, then the sweetest perfumes in your Apothecaries shoppes, or the rare compounds of Spices, when they are beaten in an open Morter. And as for the Beds, they are infinitely richer, then the verie costliest belonging to the Duke of Venice: yet (in such) each man is appointed to take his rest, the Musicke of rare Cymbals lasting all night long, much better to be by you considered, then in my rude eloquence expressed.

But of all those rich and sumptuous Beds (if pride of mine owne opinion do not deceive me) them two provided for Buffalmaco and me, had hardly any equall: he having the Queene of France as his Lady and Mistresse, and I, the renowned Queene of England, the onely two choise beauties of the whole World, and wee appeared so pleasing in their eyes, as they would have refused the greatest Monarkes on the earth, rather then to bee rejected by us. Now therefore, you may easily consider with your selfe, what great reason we have to live more merrily, then any other men can doe: in regard we enjoy the gracious favour of two such Royall Queenes, receyving also from them (whensoever wee please to commaund them) a thousand or two thousand Florines at the least, which are both truly and duly sent us. Enjoying thus the benefit of this high happinesse, we that are companions of this Society, do tearme it in our vulgar Language, The Pyrats voyage to Corsica. Because, as Rovers or Pyrats robbe and take away the goodes of such as they meete withall, even so do we: only there remaineth this difference betweene us, that they never restore what they have taken: which we do immediately afterward, whether it be required or no. And thus Master Doctor, as to my most endeered friend, I have now revealed the meaning of sayling to

Corsica, after the manner of our private Pyracie, and how important the close retention of the voiage is, you are best able your selfe to judge: In which regarde, remember your Oathes and faithfull promises, or else I am undone for ever.

Our worthy wise Doctor, whose best skill scarsely extended so farre, as to cure the itch in Children; gave such sound beleefe to the relation of Bruno, as any man could doe, to the most certaine truth of life or death: having his desire immeasurably enflamed, to bee made a member of this straunge Societie, which hee more coveted, then any thing in the world beside, accounting it a felicity farre beyond all other.

Whereupon he answered Bruno, that it was no great matter of mervaile, if he lived so merily as he did, having such a singular supply, to avoide all necessities whatsoever: and very hardly could he refraine from immediate request, to be accepted into the company. But yet he thought fit to deferre it further, untill he had made Bruno more beholding to him, by friendly entertainments and other courtesies, when he might (with better hope) be bold to move the motion.

Well may you conceive, that nothing more hammerd in the Doctors head, then this rare voyage to Corsica, and Bruno was his daily guest at dinner and supper, with such extraordinary apparances of kindnesse and courtesie, as if the Physitian could not live, except he had the company of Bruno. Who seeing himselfe to bee so lovingly respected, and hating ingratitude, for favours so abundantly heaped on him: hee painted the whole story of Lent about his Hall, and an Agnus Dei fairely gilt, on the portall of his Chamber, as also a goodly Urinall on his street doore, to the end, that such as had neede of his counsell, might know where so judicious a Doctour dwelt. In a Gallery likewise by his Garden, he painted the furious Battaile betweene the Rats and Cats, which did (not a little) delight Master Doctor.

Moreover, at such times as Bruno had not supt with our Physitian, he would bee sure to tell him on the morrow, that the night passed, he had bin with the Company which he did wot of. And there (quoth he) the Queene of England having somewhat offended mee, I commanded, that the Gomedra, belonging to the Grand Cham of Tartaria, should be brought me, and instantly shee was. What may be the meaning of Gomedrabe? said the Doctor, I understand not those difficult names. I beleeve you Sir, answered Bruno, nor do I need to marvaile thereat: and yet I have heard Porcograsso speake, and also Vannacenna, and both unexperienced in our Language. You would say (replyed the Doctor) Hippocrates and Avicenna, who were two admirable Physitians. It may be so (said Bruno) and as hardly do I understand your names, as you mine: but Gomedra, in the Grand Chams language, signifies Empresse in ours. But had you once seene her Sir, she would make you forget all Physicall observations, your arguments, receits, and medicines, onely to be in her heavenly presence, which words he used (perceiving his forward longing) to enflame him the more. Not long after, as the doctor was holding the candle to Bruno, at the perfecting the bloody Battayle of the Cattes and Rattes, because he could never bee wearied in his Companie, and therefore was the more willing, to undergoe the office of the Candle-holder: he resolved to acquaint him with his minde, and being all alone by themselves, thus he began.

Bruno, as heaven knoweth, there is not this day any creature living, for whom I would gladly do more, then for thee, and the very least word of thy mouth, hath power to commaund mee to goe bare-footed, even from hence so farre as to Peretola, and account my labour well employed for thy sake: wherefore, never wonder at my continuall kindnesse towards thee, using thee as my Domesticke companion, and embracing thee as my bosome friend, and therefore I am the bolder in mooving one request unto thee. As thou well knowest, it is no long while since, when thou diddest acquaint me with the behaviour of the Corsicane Roving Company, to be one in so rare and excellent a Society, such hath bin my earnest longing ever since, as day nor night have I enjoyed anie rest, but should thinke my felicity beyond all compare, if I could be entertained in fellowship among you.

Nor is this desire of mine but upon great occasion, as thou thy selfe shalt perceive, if I prove accepted into your Societie, and let me then be made a mocking stocke for ever, if I cause not to come thither, one of the most delicate young women, that ever anie eye beheld, and which I my selfe saw (not above a yeare since) at Cacavinciglia, on whom I bestowed my intirest affection, and (by the best Urinall that ever I gazed on) would have given her tenne faire Bologninaes, to yeeld the matter I moved to her, which yet I could not (by any meanes) compasse. Therefore, with all the flowing faculties of my soule I entreate thee, and all the very uttermost of my all indeede; to instruct me in those wayes and meanes, whereby I may hope to be a member of you. Which if thou dooest accomplish for me, and I may finde it effectually performed: I shall not onely be thy true and loyall friend for ever, but will honour thee beside, beyond all men living.

I know thee to bee a man of judgement, deepely informed in all well-grounded experience: thou seest what a propper, portly, and comely man I am, how fitly my legges are answerable to my body, my lookes amiable, lovely, and of Rosie colour: beside I am a Doctor of Physicke, of which profession (being only most expedient) I thinke you have not one in your Society. I have many commendable qualities in me, as, playing on divers instruments, exquisite in singing, and composing rare ditties, whereof I will instantly sing thee one. And so he began to sing.

Bruno was swolne so bigge with desire of laughter, that hee had scarsely any power to refraine from it: neverthelesse, he made the best meanes he could devise: and the Song being ended, the Physition saide. How now Bruno? What is thine opinion of my singing? Beleeve me Sir, replyed Bruno, the Vialles of Sagginali, will loose their very best times, in contending against you, so mirilifficially are the sweet accents of your voice heard. I tell thee truly Bruno (answered Master Doctor) thou couldst not by any possibility have beleeved it, if thou hadst not heard it. In good sadnes Sir (said Bruno) you speake most truly. I could (quoth the Doctor) sing thee infinite more beside, but at this time I must forbeare them. Let mee then further informe thee Bruno, that beside the compleat perfections thou seest in me, my father was a Gentleman, althogh he dwelt in a poore Country village, and by my mothers side, I am derived from them of Vallecchio. Moreover, as I have formerly shewn thee, I have a goodly Library of Bookes, yea, and so faire and costly garments, as few Physitians in Florence have the like. I protest to thee upon my faith, I have one gowne, which cost me (in readie money) almost an hundred poundes in Bagattinoes, and it is not yet above ten yeares old. Wherefore let me prevaile with thee, good Bruno, to worke so with the rest of thy friends, that I may bee one of your singular Society; and, by the honest trust thou reposest in mee, bee boldly sick whensoever thou wilt, my paines and Physicke shall be freely thine, without the payment of one single peny. Bruno hearing his importunate words, and knowing him (as all men else did beside) to be a man of more words then wit, saide. Master Doctor, snuffe the candle I pray you, and lend me a little more light with it hitherward, until

I have finished the tailes of these Rats, and then I wil answer you.

When the Rats tailes were fully finished, Bruno declaring by outward behaviour, that he greatly distasted the matter mooved, thus answered. Worthy Master Doctor, the courtesies you have already extended towards me, and the bountifull favours promised beside, I know to be exceeding great, and farre beyond the compasse of any merit in me. But concerning your request, albeit in respect of your admired braine and Wisedome, it is of little or no moment at all; yet it appeareth over-mighty to mee, and there is not any man now living in the world, that hath the like Authoritie over me, and can more commaund me, then you (with one poore syllable) easily may doe: as well in regarde of my Love and Dutie, as also your singular and sententious speeches, able not onelie to make me breake a sound and setled resolution, but (almost) to move Mountaines out of their places, and the more I am in your Learned company, so much the faster am I lincked unto you, in immooveable affection, so farre am I in love with your admirable qualities. And had I no other reason, to affect you in such endeared manner, as I doe; yet because you are enamoured of so rare a beauty, as you have already related to me, it onely were a motive sufficient to compell me. But indeed I must need tell you, that I have not so much power in this case, as you (perhaps) do imagine, which barreth me from such forward readines, as otherwise needed not to be urged. Neverthelesse, having so solemnly ingaged your faith to me, and no way misdoubting your faithfull secrecy, I shall instruct you in some meanes to be observed; and it appeareth plainly to me, that being furnished with such plenty of Bookes, as you are, and other rich endowments, as you have before rehersed, you cannot but attaine to the full period of your longing desire.

Speake boldly thy minde Bruno, answered the Doctour: for, I perceive thou hast no perfect knowledge of me as yet, neither what an especiall gift I have of secrecy. Messer Gasparino da Salicete, when he was Judge and Potestat over the people of Forlini, made choise of mee (among infinite of his dearest friends) to acquaint with a secret of no meane moment. And such a faithfull Secretary he found me, as I was the onely man, that knew his mariage with Bergamino; why then should any distrust be made of me? If it be so as you say Sir (answered Bruno) your credit is the sounder, and I dare the better adventure on your fidelity: the meanes then which you are to worke by, I shall now direct you in.

We have alwayes in this noble Society of ours, a Captaine, and two Counsellors, which are changed at every six months end. And now at Christmas next (so neere drawing on) Buffalmaco shal be elected Captaine, and my selfe one of the Counsellers, for so it is already agreed on, and orderly set downe. Now, he that is Captain, may doe much more then any other can, and appoint matters as himselfe pleaseth. Wherefore I thinke it very expedient, that so soone as possibly you may, you procure acquaintance with Buffalmaco, entreating him with all respective courtesie. Hee is a man, who when he perceyveth you to be so wonderfully Wise and discreete, he will be immediatly in love with you: so, when you have your best senses about you, and your richest wearing Garments on (alwayes remembred, that your acquaintance first be fully confirmed) then never feare to urge your request, for he can have no power at all to denie you; because I have already spoken of you to him, and find him to stand affected unto you verie intirely: thus when you have begunne the businesse, leave me to deale with him in the rest.

Now trust me kinde friend Bruno, replyed the Physitian, I like your advice exceeding well. For, if hee be a man, that taketh delight to converse with men of skill and judgement, and you have made the way for his knowing me: he wil him thirst, and long to follow after mee, to understand the incredible eloquence flowing from me, and the rare composition of my Musicall Ditties, out of which he may learne no meane wisedome. When the matter was thus agreed on betweene them, Bruno departed thence, and acquainted Buffalmaco with everie circumstance: which made him thinke everie day a yeare, untill he might joyne in the fooling of Mayster Doctour, according to his owne fancie. Who beeing also as desirous on the other side, to make one in the Corsicane Voyage; could take no manner of rest either by day or night, till he was linked in friendship with Buffalmaco, which very quickely after hee compassed.

For now there wanted no costly dinners and suppers, with al delicates could be devised, for the entertainement of Buffalmaco and Bruno; who, like Guests very easie to be invited, where rich wines and good cheare are never wanting, needed little sending for, because his house was as familiar to them, as their owne. In the end, when the Physitian espyed an opportunitie apt for the purpose, he made the same request to Buffalmaco, as formerly hee had done to Bruno. Whereat Buffalmaco, sodainly starting, and looking frowningly on Bruno, as if he were extraordinarily incensed against him: clapping his hand furiously on the Table, he sayde. I sweare by the great God of Pasignano, that I can hardly refrayne from giving thee such a blow on the face, as should make thy Nose to fall at thy heeles: vile Traitor as thou art: for none beside thy selfe, could discover so rare and excellent a secret unto this famous Physitian. The Doctour, with very plausible and pleasing tearmes, excused the matter verie artificially; protesting, that another had revealed it unto him: and after many wise circumstantiall Allegations, at length hee prevailed so farre, that Buffalmaco was pacified; who afterwardes turning in kinde manner, thus hee beganne.

Master Doctour, you have lived both at Bologna, and heere in these partes with us, having (no doubt) sufficiently understoode, what it is to carry a close mouth, I meane the true Charracter of taciturnitie. Questionlesse, you never learned the A. B. C. as now foolish Ideots do, blabbing their lessons all about the towne, which is much better apprehended by rumination; and surely (if I be not much deceyved) your Nativity happened on a Sonday morning, Sol being at that time, Lord of the ascendent, joyned with Mercurie in a fierie Triplicitie. By such conference as I have had with Bruno, I conceyved (as he himselfe also did) that you were verie singular in Physicke onely: but it seemeth, your Studies reached a higher straine, for you have learned, and know verie skilfullie, how to steale mens hearts from them, yea, to bereave them of their verie soules, which I perceyve that you can farre better doe, then any man else living to my knowledge, only by your wise, witty, judicious, and more then meere Mercurian eloquence, such as I never heard before.

The Physitian interrupting him bashfully, turned himselfe unto Bruno, saying. Did not I tell thee this before? Observe what a notable thing it is, to speake well, and to frequent the company of the Wise. A thousand other, meerely blockes and dullardes by Nature, could never so soone comprehend all the particularities of my knowledge, as this honest and apprehensive man hath done. Thou didst not search into it halfe so soone, nor (indeed) did I expresse a quarter of my ingenuity to thee, as (since his comming) hath prodigally flowne from me.

Well do I remember thy words, that Buffalmaco delighted to be among men of Wisedome: and have I not now fitted him unto his owne desire? How thinkest thou Bruno? The best (quoth Bruno) that any man living in the World could do. Ah worthy Buffalmaco, answered the Physitian: What wouldst thou then have sayde, if thou hadst seene me at Bologna, where there was neyther great nor small, Doctor nor Scholler, but thought themselves happy by being in my company? If I ought any debts, I discharged them with my very wittie words: and whensoever I spake, I could set them al on a hearty laughter, so much pleasure they tooke in hearing mee. And when I departed thence, no men in the world could bee more sorrowfull then they, as desiring nothing more then my remayning among them; which they expressed so apparantly, that they made humble suite and intercession to me, to bee cheefe Reader of the Physicke-Lecture, to all the Schollers studying our profession. But I could not be so perswaded, because my minde was wholly addicted hither, to enjoy those Goods, Landes, and Inheritances, belonging lineally to them of our house, and accordingly I did performe it.

How now Buffalmaco (quoth Bruno) what is thine opinion now? Thou wouldst not beleeve me when I told thee, that there is not a Doctor in all these parts, more skilfull in distinguishing the Urine of an Asse, from any other, then this most expert and singular man: and I dare boldly maintaine it, that his fellow is not to bee found, from hence to the very gates of Paris. Go then, and doe the uttermost endeavour that thou canst, to grant the request which he hath made.

Beleeve me Buffalmaco, saide the Doctor, Bruno hath spoken nothing but truth, for I am scarsely knowne heere in this City, where (for the most part) they are all grosse-witted people, rather then any jot judicious: but I would thou hadst seene me among the Doctors, in manner as I was wont to be. In troth Sir, replyed Buffalmaco, you are much more Learned then ever I imagined, in which respect, speaking unto you as it becommeth me, to a man so excellent in wit and understanding: I dare assure you, that (without any faile) I wil procure you to be one of our Company.

After this promise thus made, the good cheare, favors and kindnesses done by the Doctor to them, was beyond the compasse of all relation: whereof they made no more then a meere mockery, flouting him to his face, and yet his Wisedome could not discerne it. Moreover, they promised, that they would give him to Wife, the faire Countesse di Civillari, who was the onely goodliest creature to be found in the whole Culattario of humane generation. The Doctor demanded, what Countesse that was? Oh Sir, answered Buffalmaco, she is a great Lady, one worthy to have issue by; and few houses are there in the world, where she hath not some jurisdiction and command: so that not meane people onely, but even the greatest Lords, at the sound of her Trumpets, do very gladlie pay her tribute. And I dare boldly affirme, that whensoever shee walketh to any place, she yeeldeth a hot and sensible savour, albeit she keepeth most of all close. Yet once every night, shee duely observeth it (as a Custome) to passe from her owne house, to bathe her feete in the River of Arno, and take a little of the sweeter Ayre: albeit her continuall residencie, is within the Kingdome of Laterino.

She seldome walketh abroad, but goeth with her attending Officers about her, who (for more demonstration of her greatnesse) do carry the Rod and plummet of Lead. Store of her Lords and Barons are every where to be seene; as the Tamagnino della porta, Don Meta di Sirropa; Manico di Scopa; Signior Squacchera, and others beside, who are (as I suppose) oftentimes your daily visitants, when of necessity they must be remembred. All our care and courtesie shall extend so farre (if we doe not faile in our enterprize) to leave you in the armes of so Majestick a Ladie, quite forgetting hir of Cacavinciglia.

The Physitian, who was borne and brought up at Bologna, and therefore understoode not these Florentine tearmes: became fully contented to enjoy the Ladie; and, within some few dayes following, the Painters brought him tydings, that they had prepared the way for his entertainment into the Societie of Rovers. The day being come, when the supposed assembly was to be made the night following: the Physitian invited them both to dinner; when he demanding, what provision he shold make for his entrance into their company, Buffalmaco returned him this answer, whereto hee gave very heedfull attention.

Master Doctor, you must be first of all, strongly armed with resolution and confidence: for, if you be not, you may not only receyve hindrance, but also do us great harme beside: and now you shall heare, in what manner, and how you are to be bold and constant. You must procure the meanes, this instant night, when all the people are in their soundest sleepe, to stand upon one of those high exalted Tombs or Monuments, which are in the churchyard of Santa Maria Novella, with the very fairest gowne you have about you, because you may appeare in the more honorable condition, before the assembly seated together, and likewise to make good our speeches already delivered of you, concerning your qualitie and profession: that the Countesse, perceyving you to bee a woorthie Gentleman, may have you first honoured with the Bathe, and afterward Knighted at her owne cost and charge. But you must continue stil upon the Tombe (dreadlesse of nightly apparitions and visions) untill such time as we send for you.

And for your better information in every particulare; a Beaste, blacke and horned, but of no great stature, will come to fetch you: perhaps he will use some gastly noises, straunge leapes, and loftie trickes, onely to terrifie and affright you: but when he perceiveth that he cannot daunt you, hee will gently come neere you, which when he hath done, you may descend from off the Tombe; and, without naming or thinking on God, or any of his Saintes, mount boldly on his backe, for he will stand ready to receive you. Being so seated, crosse your armes over your brest, without presuming to touch or handle the Beast, for he will carry you thence softly, and so bring you along to the company. But if in all this time of your travaile, you call on heaven, any Saint, or bee possessed with the least thought of feare: I must plainely tell you, that either hee will cast you dangerously, or throw you into some noysom place. And therefore, if you know your selfe, not to be of a constant courage, and sprightly bold, to undertake such an adventure as this: never presume any further, because you may doe us a great deale of injurie, without any gaine or benefite to your selfe, but rather such wrong, as we would be very sorry should happen unto so deere a Friend.

Alas honest Buffalmaco, answered the Physitian, thou art not halfe acquainted with me as yet: because I walke with gloves upon my hands, and in a long Gowne, thou perhappes doest imagine mee a faint-hearted fellow. If thou didst know, what I have heeretofore done at Bologna in the night time, when I and my Consorts went to visite pretty wenches, thou wouldst wonder at my couragious attempts. As I am a Gentleman, one night, we met with a young Bona Roba, a paltry greene-sicknesse baggage, scarsely above a Cubite in height, and because she refused to go with us willingly, I gave her a kicke on the bum, and spurnde her more then a Crosse-bowe shoote in distance from me, and made her walke with us whether she would, or no. Another time I remember, when having no other company but my boy, I went thorow the Churchyard of the Fryars Minors, after the sounding of Ave Maria: a woman hadde beene buried there the very same day, and yet I was not a jotte affraid.

Wherefore, never be distrustfull of mee, but resolvedly builde upon my courage. And in regard of my more honourable entertainment, I will then weare my Scarlet Gowne and Hood, wherein I receyved my graduation; and then do both of you observe, what a rejoycing will be among the whole company, at the entertaining of such a man as I am, enough to create me Captaine immediatly. You shall perceive also how the case will go, after I have beene there but a while, in regard that the Countesse (having as yet never seene me) is so deepely enamored of mee: she cannot choose but bestow the Bathe and Knighthood on me, which shee shall have the more honour of, in regard I am well able to maintaine it, therefore referre all the rest to mee, and never misdoubt your injurie or mine.

Spoken like a Gallant, replyed Buffalmaco, and I feare not now, but we shall winne credite by your company. But be carefull I pray you, that you make not a mockery of us, and come not at all, or fayle to be there, when the Beast shall be sent for you; I speake it the rather, because it is cold weather, and you Gentlemen Physitians can hardly endure it. You are carefull of mee (quoth the Doctor) and I thanke you for it, but I applaud my faire Starres, I am none of your nice or easie-frozen fellowes, because cold weather is very familiar to me. I dare assure you, when I arise in the night time for that naturall office whereto all men are subject, I weare no warmer defence, then my thin wastcoat over my shirt, and finde it sufficient for the coldest weather at any time.

When Bruno and Buffalmaco had taken their leave, the Physitian, so soone as night drew neere, used many apt excuses to his wife, stealing forth his Scarlet Gowne and Hood unseene of any, wherewith being clothed: at the time appointed, he got upon one of the Marble Tombes, staying there (quaking with cold) awaiting when the Beast should come. Buffalmaco, being a lusty tall man of person, had got an ugly masking suite, such as are made use of in Tragedies and Playes, the out-side being of black shagged haire, wherwith being cloathed, he seemed like a strange deformed Beare, and a Divels vizard over his face, with two gastly horrible hornes, and thus disguised, Bruno following him, they went to behold the issue of the businesse, so farre as the new Market place, closely adjoining to Santa Maria Novella.

Having espyed Master Doctor uppon the Tombe, Buffalmaco in his mishapen habite, began to bound, leape, and carriere, snuffling and blowing in mad and raging manner: which when the Physitian saw, his haire stood on end, he quaked and trembled, as being more fearfull then a Woman, wishing himselfe at home againe in his house, rather then to behold a sight so dreadfull. But because he was come forth, and had such an earnest desire, to see the wonders related to him; he made himselfe so coragious as possibly he could, and bare all out in formall manner. After that Buffalmaco had (an indifferent while) plaide his horse-trickes, ramping and stamping somewhat strangely: seeming as become of much milder temper, he went neere to the Tomb whereon the Physitian stood, and there appeared to stay contentedly.

Master Doctor, trembling and quaking still extreamely, was so farre dismayed, as he knew not what was best to be done, either to mount on the beasts backe, or not to mount at all. In the end, thinking no harme could happen to him, if he were once mounted, with the second feare, hee expelled the former, and descending downe softly from the Tombe, mounted on the beast, saying out alowde: God, Saint Dominicke, and my good Angell helpe to defend mee. Seating himselfe so well as he could, but trembling still exceedingly; he crossed his armes over his stomacke, according to the Lesson given him.

Then did Buffalmaco shape his course in milde manner, toward Santa Maria della Scala, and groping to finde his way in the darke, went on so farre as the Sisters of Ripole, commonly called the Virgin Sanctuary. Not farre off from thence, were divers trenches and ditches, wherein such men as are imployed in necessary night-services, used to empty the Countesse di Cimillari, and afterward imployed it for manuring Husbandmens grounds. Buffalmaco, being come neere one of them, he stayed to breath himselfe awhile, and then catching fast hold on one of the Doctours feete, raysed him somewhat higher on his back, for the easier discharging of his burthen, and so pitched him (with his head forwardes) into the Laystall.

Then began he to make a dreadful kinde of noise, stamping and trampling with his feete, passing backe againe to Santa Maria della Scala, and to Prato d'Ognissanti, where hee met with Bruno, who was constrained to forsake him, because he could not refraine from lowde Laughter, then both together went backe once more, to see how the Physitian would behave himselfe, being so sweetely embrued.

Master Doctor, seeing himselfe to bee in such an abhominable stinking place, laboured with all his utmost endevour, to get himself released thence: but the more he contended and strove for getting forth, he plunged himselfe the further in, being most pitifully myred from head to foot, sighing and sorrowing extraordinarily, because much of the foule water entred in at his mouth. In the end, being forced to leave his hood behinde him, scrambling both with his hands and feet, he got landing out of his stinking Labyrinth, and having no other means, home he returned to his own house, where knocking at the doore, he was at length admitted entrance. The doore being scarse made fast againe after his letting in, Buffalmaco and Bruno were there arrived, listning how M. Doctor should bee welcomd home by his angry wife: who scolding and railing at him with wonderfull impatience, gave him most hard and bitter speeches, terming him the vilest man living.

Where have you bin Sir? quoth she. Are you becom a night-walker after other Women? And could no worse garments serve your turne, but your Doctors gown of Scarlet? Am I to suffer this behaviour? Or am not I sufficient to content you, but you must be longing after change? I would thou hadst bin stifled in that foule filth, where thy fouler life did justly cast thee. Behold goodly Master Doctor of the Leystall, who being maried to an honest woman must yet go abroad in the night time, insatiatly lusting after whores and harlots. With these and the like intemperate speeches, she ceased not to afflict and torment him, till the night was almost spent, and the Doctor brought into a sweeter savour.

The next morning, Bruno and Buffalmaco, having colourd their bodyes with a strange kinde of painting, resembling blisters, swellings, and bruises, as if they had bin extreamly beaten; came to the Physitians house, finding him to be newly up, al the house yet smelling of his foule savour (although it had bin very well perfumed) and being admitted to him in the Garden, hee welcommed them with the mornings salutations. But Bruno and Buffalmaco (being otherwise provided for him) delivering stearne and angry lookes, stamping and chafing, Bruno thus replyed.

Never speake so faire and flattering to us, for we are moved beyond all compasse of patience. All misfortunes in the worlde fall upon you, and an evill death may you dye, like the most false and perfidious Traitor living on the earth. We must beate our braines, and move all our most endeared friends, onely for your honor and advancement: while wee were well neere starved to death in the cold like Dogs, and, by your breach of promise, have bin this night so extreamly beaten, as if (like Asses) we should have beene driven to Rome.

But that which is most greevous of all, is danger of excluding out of the Society, where wee tooke good order for your admittance, and for your most honourable entertainment. If you wil not credit us, behold our bodies, and let your owne eyes be witnesses, in what cruell manner we have bin beaten. So taking him aside under the Gallery, where they might not be discovered by overmuch light, they opened their bosomes, shewing him their painted bodies, and sodainly closed them up againe.

The Physitian laboured to excuse himselfe, declaring his misfortunes at large, and into what a filthy place he was throwne. It maketh no matter (answered Buffalmaco) I would you had bin throwen from off the Bridge into Arno, where you might have beene recommended to the Divell, and all his Saints. Did not I tell you so much before. In good sadnesse (quoth the Doctor) I neyther commended my selfe to God, nor any of his Saints. How? sayde Buffalmaco, I am sure you will not maintaine an untruth, you used a kind of recommendation: for our messenger told us, that you talked of God, S. Dominicke, and your good Angell, whom you desired to assist you, being so affrighted with feare, that you trembled like a leafe upon a tree, not knowing indeede where you were. Thus have you unfaithfully dealt with us, as never any man shall doe the like againe, in seeking honour, and losing it through your own negligence.

Master Doctor humbly entreated pardon, and that they would not revile him any more, labouring to appease them by the best words he could use, as fearing least they should publish this great disgrace of him. And whereas (before) he gave them gracious welcomes; now he redoubled them with farre greater courtesies, feasting them daily at his own table, and evermore delighting in their company. Thus (as you have heard) two poore Painters of Florence, taught Master Doctor better Wit, then all the Learned at Bologna.

THE TENTH NOVELL

WHEREBY APPEARETH, THAT SUCH AS MEET WITH CUNNING HARLOTS, AND SUFFER THEMSELVES TO BE DECEIVED BY THEM: MUST SHARPEN THEIR WITS, TO MAKE THEM REQUITALL IN THE SELFESAME KINDE.

A CICILIAN *Courtezane, named Madame Biancafiore, by her craftie wit and policie, deceived a young Merchant, called Salabetto, of all the money he had taken for his Wares at Palermo. Afterward, he making shew of comming hither againe, with farre richer Merchandises then hee brought before: made the meanes to borrow a great summe of Money of her, leaving her so base a pawne, as well requited her for her former cozenage.*

NEEDLESSE it were to question, whether the Novell related by the Queene, in divers passages thereof, mooved the Ladies to hearty laughter, and likewise to compassionate sighes and teares; as pittying Madame Helena in her hard misfortune, and yet applauding the Scholler for his just revenge. But the discourse being ended, Dioneus, who knew it was his Office to be the last speaker every day, after silence was commanded, he began in this manner.

Worthy Ladies, it is a matter very manifest, that deceits do appeare so much the more pleasing, when (by the selfesame meanes) the subtle deceyver is artificially deceived. In which respect, though you all have reported very singular deceits: yet I meane to tel you one, that may prove as pleasing to you, as any of your owne. And so much the rather, because the woman deceived, was a great and cunning Mistris in beguiling others; equalling (if not excelling) any of your former beguilers.

It hath bene observed heretofore, and (happily) at this very day it is as frequent, that in all Cities and Townes upon the Sea-coasts, having Ports for the benefit and venting Merchandises; Merchants use to bring their wealthy laden Vessels thither. And when they unlade any Ship of great fraught, there are prepared Store-houses, which in many places are called Magazines or Doganaes, at the charge of the Communalty, or Lord of the Towne or City, for the use whereof, they receive yearly gain and benefit. Into those warehouses, they deliver (under writing, and to the owners of them in especiall charge) all their goods and merchandises, of what price or valew soever they are.

Such as be the Owners of these Magazines, when the Wares are thus stored uppe in them, doe safely locke them up there with their keyes, having first registred downe truly all the goods, in the Register belonging to the Custome-house, that the Merchant may have a just account rendred him, and the rights payed to the Custome-house, according to the Register, and as they are either in part, or in all made sale of.

Brokers are continually there attending, being informed in the quality of the Merchandises stored, and likewise to what Merchants they appertaine: by meanes of these men, and according as the goods come to their hands, they devise to have them exchaunged, trucked, vented, and such other kinds of dispatches, answerable to the mens minds, and worth of the Commodities. As in many other Kingdomes and Countries, so was this custome observed at Palermo in Sicily, where likewise then were, and (no doubt) now adayes are, store of Women, faire and comely of person, but yet vowed enemies to honesty.

Neverthelesse, by such as know them not, they are held and reputed to be blamelesse Women, and by yeilding their bodyes unto generall use, are the occasion of infinite misfortunes to men. For so soone as they espy a Merchant-stranger there arrived, they win information from the Booke belonging to the Magazin, what wares are therein stored, of what valew they bee, and who is the Owner of them. Afterwards, by amorous actions, and affable speeches, they allure yong Merchants to take knowledge of them, to bee familiar in their company, till from some they get most part of their wealth, from others all. Nay, divers have gone so farre, as to make Port-sale of Ship, Goods, and Person, so cunningly they have bene shaven by these Barbers, and yet without any Razor.

It came to passe, and no long time since, that a young Florentine of ours, named Niccolo de Cignano, but more usually called Salabetto, imployed as Factor for his Maister, arrived at Palermo; his Ship stored with many Woollen Cloathes, a remainder of such as had bin sold at the Mart of Salerno; amounting in valew to above five hundred Florines of Gold. When he had given in his packet to the Custome-house, and made them up safe in his Warehouse; without making shew of desiring any speedy dispatch, he delighted to view all parts of the City, as mens minds are continuallie addicted to Novelties. He being a very faire and affable yong man, easie to kindle affection in a very modest eie: it fortuned, that a Courtezane, one of our before remembred shavers, who termed hir selfe Madame Biancafiore, having heard somewhat concerning his affairs, beganne to dart amorous glances at him. Which the indiscreete youth perceyving, and thinking her to be some great Lady: began also tc grow halfe perswaded, that his comely person was pleasing to her and therefore he would carrie this good fortune of his somewhat cautelously.

Without imparting his mind unto any one, he would daily passe too and fro before her doore; which she observing, and having indifferently wounded him with her wanton piercing lookes: she began to use the first tricke of her Trade, by pretending her enflamed affection towards him, which made her pine and consume away in care, except he might be moved to pitty her. Whereupon, she sent one of her Pandoraes unto him, perfectly instructed in the Art of a Maquerella, who (after many cunning counterfetted sighes, and teares, which she had alwayes ready at command, told him; that his comely person and compleate perfections, had so wounded the very soule of her Mistresse, as she could enjoy no rest in any place, either by day or night. In regard whereof, she desired (above all things else) to meete with him privately in a Bathe: with which Wordes, she straightway tooke a Ring forth of her pursse, and in most humble manner, delivered it unto him, as a token from her Mistresse.

Salabetto having heard this Message, was the onely joyfull man that could be: and having receyved the Ring, looking on it advisedly; first kissed it, and then put it upon his finger. Then in answer to the Messenger, he sayd: That if her Mistresse Biancafiore affected him, she sustained no losse thereby, in regard he loved her as fervently, and was ready to be commanded by her, at any time whensoever she pleased.

She having delivered this message to her Mistresse, was presently returned backe againe to him, to let him understand, in which of the Bathes she meant to meet him, on the next morrow in the evening. This being counsell for himselfe onely to keepe, he imparted it not to any friend whatsoever; but when the houre for their meeting was come, he went unto the place where he was appointed, a Bathe (belike) best agreeing with such businesse.

Not long had he taried there, but two Women slaves came laden to him, the one bearing a Mattresse of fine Fustian on hir head, and the other a great Basket filled with many things. Having spred the Mattresse in a faire Chamber on a Couch-bed, they covered it with delicate white Linnen sheets, all about embroidred with faire Fringes of gold, then laid they on costly quilts of rich Silkes, artificially wrought with gold and silver knots, having pearles and precious stones interwoven among them, and two such rich pillowes, as sildome before had the like bin seene. Salabetto putting off his garments, entred the Bath prepared for him, where the two Slaves washed his body very neatly. Soone after came Biancafiore hirselfe, attended on by two other women slaves, and seeing Salabetto in the Bathe; making him a lowly reverence, breathing forth infinite dissembled sighes, and teares trickling downe her cheekes, kissing and embracing him, thus she spake.

I know not what man else in the worlde, beside thy selfe, could have the power to bring me hither: the fire flew from thy faire eies (O thou incompareable lovely Tuscane) that melted my soule, and makes me onely live at thy command. Then hurling off her light wearing garment (because she came prepared for the purpose) shee stept into the bathe to him, and, not permitting the Slaves a-while to come neere, none but her selfe must now lave his body, with Muske compounded Sope and Gilly-floures. Afterward, the slaves washed both him and her, bringing two goodly sheetes, softe and white, yeelding such a delicate smell of Roses, even as if they had bene made of Rose-leaves. In the one, they folded Salabetto, and her in the other, and so conveyed them on their shoulders unto the prepared Bed-Couch, where because they should not sweate any longer, they tooke the sheets from about them, and laid them gently in the bed.

Then they opened the Basket, wherein were divers goodly Silver bottles, some filled with Rosewaters, others with flowers of Orenges, and Waters distilled of Gelsomine, Muske, and Amber-Greece, wherewith (againe) the slaves bathed their bodyes in the bed, and afterward presented them with variety of Comfites, as also very precious Wines, serving them in stead of a little Collation. Salabetto supposed himself to be in Paradise: for this appeared to be no earthly joy, bestowing a thousand gladsome gazes on her, who (questionlesse) was a most beautifull creature, and the tarrying of the Slaves, seemed millions of yeares to him, that hee might more freely embrace his Biancafiore. Leaving a Waxe Taper lighted in the Chamber, the slaves departed, and then shee sweetly embracing Salabetto, bestowed those further favours on him, which hee came for, and she was not squeamish in the affoording; wherof he was exceedingly joyfull, because he imagined, that they proceeded from the integrity of her affection towards him.

When she thought it convenient time to depart thence, the slaves returned; they cloathed themselves, and had a Banquet standing ready prepared for them; wherewith they cheared their wearyed spirits, after they had first washed in odorifferous waters. At parting: Salabetto (quoth she) whensoever thy leysures shal best serve thee, I will repute it as my cheefest happinesse, that thou wilt accept a Supper and Lodging in my house, which let it be this instant night, if thou canst. He being absolutely caught, both by hir beauty and flattering behaviour: beleeved faithfully, that he was as intirely beloved of her, as the heart is of the body: whereuppon hee thus answered. Madame, whatsoever pleaseth you, must needes be much more acceptable unto mee: and therefore, not onely may command my service this night, but likewise the whole employment of my life, to be onely yours in my very best studies and endeavours.

No sooner did she heare this answer, but she returned home to her owne house, which she decked in most sumptuous maner, and also made ready a costly Supper, expecting the arrivall of Salabetto: who when the darke night was indifferently well entred, went thither, and was welcommed with wonderfull kindnesse, wanting no costly Wines and Delicates all the Supper while. Being afterward conducted into a goodly Chamber, he smelt there admirable sweete senting savours, such as might well beseeme a Princes Pallace. He beheld a most costly Bed, and very rich furniture round about the roome: which when he had duly considered to himself, he was constantly perswaded, that she was a Lady of infinit wealth. And although he had heard divers flying reports concerning her life, yet hee would not credite any thing amisse of her, for albeit she might (perhappes) beguile some other; yet shee affected him (he thought) in better manner, and no such misfortune could happen to him.

Having spent all the night with her in wanton dalliances, and being risen in the morning; to enflame his affection more and more towards her, and to prevent any ill opinion he might conceyve of her, she bestowed a rich and costly Girdle on him, as also a pursse most curiously wrought, saying to him. My sweet Salabetto, with these testimonies of my true affection to thee, I give thee faithfully to understand, that as my person is onely subjected thine; so this house and all the riches in it, remaineth absolutely at thy disposition, or whatsoever hereafter shal happen within the compasse of my power.

He being not a little proud of this her bountifull offer (having never bestowed any gift on her, because by no meanes shee would admit it) after many sweet kisses and embraces; departed thence, to the place where the Merchants usually frequented: resorting to her (from time to time) as occasion served, and paying not one single peny for all his wanton pleasure, by which cunning baytes (at length) she caught him.

It came to passe, that having made sale of all his Clothes, whereby hee had great gaines, and the moneyes justly payed him at the times appointed: Biancafiore got intelligence thereof; yet not by him, but from one of the Brokers. Salabetto comming one night to sup with her, she embraced and kissed him as she was wont to doe, and seemed so wonderfully addicted in love to him, even as if shee would have dyed with delight in his armes. Instantly, shee would needs bestow two goodly gilt standing Cuppes on him, which Salabetto by no meanes would receive, because she had formerly bin very bountifull to him, to above the value of an hundred Crowns, and yet she would not take of him so much as a mite. At length, pressing still more tokens of her love and bounty on him, which he as courteously denied, as she kindly offered: one of her Women-slaves (as shee had before cunningly appointed) sodainely calling her, forthwith she departed out of her Chamber. And when she had continued a pretty while absent, she returned againe weeping, and throwing her selfe downe upon her Pallet, breathed forth such sighes and wofull lamentations, as no Woman could possibly doe the like.

Salabetto amazedly wondering thereat, tooke her in his Armes, and weeping also with her, said. Alas my deare Love, what sodain accident hath befalne you, to urge this lamentable alteration? If you love me, hide it not from me. After he had often entreated her in this manner, casting her armes about his necke, and sighing as if her heart would breake, thus she replyed.

Ah Salabetto, the onely Jewell of my joy on earth, I knowe not what to do, or say, for (even now) I received Letters from Messina, wherein my Brother writes to me, that although it cost the sale of all my goods, or whatsoever else I have beside, I must (within eight dayes space) not faile to send him a thousand Florins of gold, or else he must have his head smitten off, and I know not by what meanes to procure them so soone. For, if the limitation of fifteene dayes might serve the turne, I could borrow them in a place, where I can command a farre greater summe, or else I would sel some part of our Lands. But beeing no way able to furnish him so soone, I would I had died before I heard these dismall tydings. And in the uttering of these words, she graced them with such cunning dissembled sorrow, as if she had meant truly indeed.

Salabetto, in whom the fury of his amorous flames, had consumed a great part of his necessary understanding, beleeving these counterfetted tears and complaints of hers, to proceed from an honest meaning soule; rashly and foolishly thus replied. Deare Biancafiore, I cannot furnish you with a thousand golden Florines, but am able to lend you five hundred, if I were sure of their repayment at fifteene dayes, wherein you are highly beholding to Fortune, that I have made sale of all my Cloathes; which if they had lyen still on my hand, my power could not stretch to lend you five Florines. Alas deare heart (quoth she) would you be in such want of money, and hide it from her that loves you so loyally? Why did you not make your need knowne to me? Although I am not furnished of a thousand Florines; yet I have alwaies ready three or foure hundred by me, to do any kinde office for my friend. In thus wronging me, you have robd me of all boldnes, to presume upon your offer made me. Salabetto, far faster inveigled by these words then before, said. Let not my folly (bright Biancafiore) cause you to refuse my friendly offer, in such a case of extreme necessity: I have them ready prepared for you, and am heartily sory, that my power cannot furnish you with the whole summe.

Then catching him fast in her armes, thus she answered. Now I plainly perceive, my dearest Salabetto, that the love thou bearest me is true and perfect; when, without expectation of being requested, thou art readie to succour me in such an urgent neede, and with so faire a summe of Florines. Sufficiently was I thine owne before, but now am much more ingaged by so high deserving; with this particular acknowledgement for ever, that my Brothers head was redeemed by thy goodnesse onely. Heaven beareth me record, how unwilling I am to be beholding in this kind, considring that you are a Merchant, and Merchants furnish al their affairs with ready monis: but seeing necessity constraineth me, and I make no doubt of repaiment at the time appointed: I shall the more boldly accept your kindnes, with this absolute promise beside, that I wil rather sell all the houses I have, then breake my honest word with you.

Counterfeit teares still drayning downe her cheeks, and Salabetto kindly comforting her; he continued there with hir all that night, to expresse him selfe her most liberall servant. And, without expecting any more requesting, the next morning he brought her the five hundred Florines, which she received with a laughing heart, but outward dissembled weeping eies; Salabetto never demanding any other security, but onely her single promise.

Biancafiore, having thus received the five hundred Florines, the indiction of the Almanacke began to alter: and whereas (before) Salabetto could come see her whensoever he pleased, many occasions now happened, whereby he came seven times for once, and yet his entrance was scarsely admitted, neither was his entertainment so affable, or his cheare so bountifull, as in his former accesses thither. Moreover, when the time for repaiment was come, yea a moneth or two over-past, and he demanded to have his money; hee could have nothing but words for paiment. Now he began to consider on the craft and cunning of this wicked Woman, as also his owne shallow understanding, knowing he could make no proofe of his debt, but what her selfe listed to say, having neither witnes, specialty, bill or bond to shew: which made his folly so shamefull to him, that he durst not complaine to any person, because he had received some advertisements before, whereto he wold by no means listen, and now should have no other amends, but publike infamie, scorne and disgrace, which made him almost weary of his life, and much to bemoane his owne unhappinesse. He received also divers Letters from his Master, to make returne of the 500 Florines over by way of banke, according as he had used to do: but nowe could performe no such matter.

Hereupon, because his error should not be discovered, he departed in a small vessell thence, not making for Pisa, as he should have done, but directly for Naples hee shaped his course. At that instant lodged there, Don Pietro della Canigiano, Treasurer of the Empresse of Constantinople, a man of great wisedome and understanding, as also very ingenious and politike, he being an especiall Favourer of Salabetto and all his friendes, which made him presume the more boldly (being urged thereto by meere necessity, the best corrector of wandering wits) to acquaint him with his lamentable misfortune, in every particular as it had hapned, requesting his aid and advice, how he might best weare out the rest of his dayes, because hee never meant to visit Florence any more.

Canigiano being much displeased at the repetition of his Follie, sharply reproved him, saying. Thou hast done leudly, in carying thy selfe so loosely, and spending thy Masters goods so carelesly, which though I cannot truly tearme spent, but rather art meerely cousened and cheated of them, yet thou seest at what a deere rate thou hast purchased pleasure, which yet is not utterly helplesse, but may by one meanes or other be recovered. And being a man of woonderfull apprehension, advised him instantly what was to bee done, furnishing him also with a summe of money, wherewith to adventure a second losse, in hope of recovering the first againe: he caused divers Packes to be well bound up, with the Merchants markes orderly made on them, and bought about twenty Buttes or Barrelles, all filled (as it were) with Oyle, and these pretended commodities being shipt, Salabetto returned with them to Palermo. Where having given in his packets to the Customehouse, and entred them all under his owne name, as being both owner and factor: all his Wares were lockt up in his Magizine, with open publication, that he would not vent any of them, before other merchandises (which he daily expected) were there also arrived.

Biancafiore having heard thereof, and understanding withall, that he had brought Merchandises now with him, amounting to above two thousand Florins, staying also in expectation of other commodities, valewing better then three thousand more, she beganne to consider with her selfe, that she had not yet gotten money enough from him, and therefore would cast a figure for a farre bigger booty. Which that she might the more fairely effect, without so much as an imagination of the least mistrust: she would repay him backe his five hundred Florines, to winne from him a larger portion of two or three thousand at the least, and having thus setled her determination, she sent to have him come speake with her. Salabetto, having bene soundly bitten before, and therefore the better warranted from the like rankling teeth, willingly went to her, not shewing any signe of former discontent: and she, seeming as if she knew nothing of the wealth he brought with him, gracing him in as loving manner as ever she had done, thus she spake.

I am sure Salabetto, you are angry with mee, because I restored not your Florines at my promised day. Salabetto smiling, presently answered. Beleeve me Lady (quoth he) it did a little distast me, even as I could have bin offended with him, that should plucke out my heart to bestow it on you, if it would yeelde you any contentment. But to let you know unfainedly, how much I am incensed with anger against you: such and so great is the affection I beare you, that I have solde the better part of my whole estate, converting the same into Wealthy Merchandises, which I have alreadie brought hither with mee, and valewing above two thousand Florines, all which are stored up in my Magazine. There must they remaine, till another Ship come forth of the Westerne parts, wherein I have a much greater adventure, amounting unto more then three thousand Florines. And my purpose is, to make my aboade heere in this City, which hath won the sole possession of my heart, onely in regard of my Biancafiore, to whom I am so intirely devoted, as both my selfe, and whatsoever else is mine (now or hereafter) is dedicated onely to her service; whereto thus she replyed.

Now trust me Salabetto, whatsoever redoundeth to thy good and benefite, is the cheefest comfort of my soule, in regard I prize thy love dearer then mine owne life, and am most joyfull of thy returne hither againe; but much more of thy still abiding heere, because I intend to live onely with thee, so soone as I have taken order for some businesse of import. In the meane while, let me entreate thee to hold me excused, because before thy departure hence, thou camest sometimes to see me, without thy entrance admitted; and other-whiles againe, found not such entertainement, as formerly had bene affoorded. But indeede, and above all the rest, in not re-paying thy money according to my promise. But consider good Salabetto, in what great trouble and affliction of minde I then was, both in regard of my Brothers danger, and other important occurrences beside, which mollestations do much distract the senses, and hinder kinde courtesies, which otherwise would bee extended liberally.

Last of all consider also, how difficult a thing it is for a woman, so sodainly to raise the summe of a thousand golden Florines, when one friend promiseth, and performeth not; another protesteth, yet hath no such meaning; a third sweareth, and yet proveth a false Lyar: so that by being thus ungently used, a breach is made betweene the best frends living. From hence it proceeded, and no other defect else, that I made not due returne of your five hundred Florins. No sooner were you departed hence, but I had them readie, and as many more, and could I have knowne whither to send them, they had bene with you long time since, which because I could not (by any meanes) compasse, I kept them still for you in continuall readinesse, as hoping of your comming hither againe. So causing a purse to be brought, wherein the same Florines were, which hee had delivered her; she gave it into his hand, and prayed him to count them over, whether there were so many, or no.

Never was Salabettoes heart halfe so joyfull before; and having counted them, found them to be his owne five hundred Florines: then, putting them up into his pocket, he saide. Comfort of my life, Full well I know that whatsoever you have saide, is most certaine; but let us talke no more of falshood in friendship, or casuall accidents happening unexpected: you have dealt with mee like a most loyall Mistresse, and heere I protest unfainedly to you, that as well in respect of this kinde courtesie, as also the constancy of mine affection to you, you cannot request hereafter a far greater summe of me, to supply any necessarie occasion of yours; but (if my power can performe it) you shall assuredly finde it certaine: make proofe thereof whensoever you please, after my other goods are Landed, and I have established my estate here in your City.

Having in this manner renewed his wonted amity with her, and with words farre enough off from all further meaning: Salabetto began againe to frequent her company, she expressing all former familiarity, shewing her selfe as lavishly bountifull to him, in all respects as before she had done, nay, many times in more magnificent manner.

But he intending to punish her notorious trechery towards him, when she left him as an open scorne to the World, wounded with disgrace, and quite out of credit with all his friends: she having (on a day) solemnly invited him, to suppe and lodge in her house all night; he went, both with sad and melancholly lookes, seeming as overcome with extreamity of sorrow. Biancafiore mervayling at this strange alteration in him, sweetly kissing and embracing him: would needs know the reason of his passionate affliction, and he permitting her to urge the question oftentimes together, without returning any direct answere; to quit her in her kind, and with coine of her owne stampe, after a few dissembled sighes, he began in this manner.

Ah my dearest Love, I am utterly undone, because the Shippe containing the rest of mine expected Merchandises, is taken by the Pyrates of Monago, and put to the ransome of tenne thousand Florines of Gold, and my part particularly, is to pay one thousand. At this instant I am utterly destitute of money, because the five hundred Florines which I received of you, I sent hence the next daie following to Naples, to buy more cloathes, which likewise are to be sent hither. And if I should now make sale of the Merchandizes in my Magazine (the time of generall utterance being not yet come) I shall not make a pennyworth for a penny. And my misfortune is the greater, because I am not so well knowne heere in your City, as to find some succour in such an important distresse; wherfore I know not what to do or say. Moreover, if the money be not speedily sent, our goods will be carried into Monago, and then they are past all redemption utterly.

Biancafiore appearing greatly discontented, as one verily perswaded, that this pretended losse was rather hers, then his, because she aymed at the mainest part of all his wealth: began to consider with her selfe, which was the likeliest course to bee taken, for saving the goods from carriage to Monago: wherupon thus she replied. Heaven knoweth (my dearest Salabetto) how thy love maketh me sorrowfull for this misfortune, and it greeveth me to see thee any way distressed: for if I had mony lying by mee (as many times I have) thou shouldst finde succour from my selfe onely, but indeede I am not able to helpe thee. True it is, there is a friend of mine, who did lend me five hundred Florines in my need, to make uppe the other summe which I borrowed of thee: but he demandeth extreme interest, because he will not abate any thing of thirty in the hundred, and if you should bee forced to use him, you must give him some good security. Now for my part, the most of my goods here I will pawne for thee: but what pledge can you deliver in to make up the rest? Wel did Salabetto conceive the occasion why she urged this motion, and was so diligent in doing him such a pleasure: for it appeared evidently to him, that her selfe was to lend the mony, wherof he was not a litle joyful, seeming very thankful to hir. Then he told her, that being driven to such extremity, how unreasonable soever the usury was, yet he would gladly pay for it. And for her Friends further security, hee would pawne him all the goods in his Magazine, entering them downe in the name of the party, who lent the money. Onely he desired to keepe the Keyes of the Ware-house, as well to shew his Merchandises, when any Merchant should bee so desirous: as also to preserve them from ill using, transporting or changing, before his redemption of them.

She found no fault with his honest offer, but sayde, hee shewed himselfe a well-meaning man, and the next morning shee sent for a Broker, in whom she reposed especiall trust; and after they had privately consulted together, shee delivered him a thousand Golden Florines, which were caried by him presently to Salabetto, and the Bond made in the Brokers name, of all the goods remaining in Salabettoes ware-house, with composition and absolute agreement, for the prefixed time of the monies repaiment. No sooner was this tricke fully accomplished, but Salabetto seeming as if he went to redeeme his taken goods: set saile for Naples towards Pietro della Canigiano, with fifteene hundred Florines of Gold: from whence also he sent contentment to his Master at Florence (who imployd him as his Factor at Palermo) beside his owne packes of Cloathes. He made repayment likewise to Canigiano, for the monies which furnished him in this last voyage, and any other to whom hee was indebted. So there he stayed awhile with Canigiano, whose counsel thus holpe him to out-reach the Sicillian Courtezane: and meaning to deale in Merchandise no more, afterward he returned to Florence and there lived in good reputation.

Now as concerning Biancafiore, when she saw that Salabetto returned not againe to Palermo, she beganne to grow somewhat abashed, as halfe suspecting that which followed. After she had tarried for him above two moneths space, and perceived hee came not, nor any tydings heard of him: shee caused the Broker to breake open the Magazine, casting forth the Buttes or Barrels, which shee beleeved to bee full of good Oyles. But they were all filled with Sea-water, each of them having a small quantity of Oyle floating on the toppe, onely to serve when a tryall should bee made. And then unbinding the Packes, made up in formall and Merchantable manner: there was nothing else in them, but Logges and stumpes of Trees, wrapt handsomely in hurdles of Hempe and Tow; onely two had Cloathes in them. So that (to bee briefe) the whole did not value two hundred

Crownes: which when she saw, and observed how cunningly she was deceived: a long while after shee sorrowed, for repaying backe the five hundred Florines, and folly in lending a thousand more, using it as a Proverbe alwaies after to hir selfe: That whosoever dealt with a Tuscane, had neede to have sound sight and judgement. So remaining contented (whither she would or no) with her losse: she plainly perceyved, that although she lived by cheating others, yet now at the length she had mette with her match.

So soone as Dioneus had ended his Novell, Madame Lauretta also knew, that the conclusion of her Regiment was come; whereupon, when the counsell of Canigiano had past with generall commendation, and the wit of Salabetto no lesse applauded, for fitting it with such an effectuall prosecution; shee tooke the Crowne of Laurell from her owne head, and set it upon Madame Æmilliaes, speaking graciously in this manner. Madam, I am not able to say, how pleasant a Queene we shall have of you, but sure I am, that we shall enjoy a faire one: let matters therefore be so honourably carried; that your government may be answerable to your beautifull perfections; which words were no sooner delivered, but she sate downe in her mounted seate.

Madame Æmillia being somewhat bashfull, not so much of hir being created Queene, as to heare her selfe thus publikely praysed, with that which Women do most of all desire: her face then appearing, like the opening of the Damaske Rose, in the goodlyest morning. But after she had a while dejected her lookes, and the Vermillion blush was vanished away: having taken order with the Master of the houshold, for all needefull occasions befitting the assembly, thus she began.

Gracious Ladies, wee behold it daily, that those Oxen which have laboured in the yoake most part of the day, for their more convenient feeding, are let forth at liberty, and permitted to wander abroad in the Woods. We see moreover, that Gardens and Orchards, being planted with variety of the fairest fruit Trees, are equalled in beauty by Woods and Forrests, in the plentifull enjoying of as goodly spreading branches. In consideration whereof, remembring how many dayes wee have already spent (under the severitie of Lawes imposed) shaping all our discourses to a forme of observation: I am of opinion, that it will not onely well become us, but also prove beneficiall for us, to live no longer under such restraint, and like enthralled people, desirous of liberty, wee should no more be subjected to the yoke, but recover our former strength in walking freely.

Wherefore, concerning our pastime purposed for to morrow, I am not minded to use any restriction, or tye you unto any particular ordination: but rather do liberally graunt, that every one shall devise and speake of arguments agreeing with your owne dispositions.

Besides, I am verily perswaded, that variety of matter uttered so freely, will be much more delightfull, then restraint to one kinde of purpose onely. Which being thus granted by me, whosoever shal succeede me in the government, may (as being of more power and preheminence) restraine all backe againe to the accustomed lawes. And having thus spoken, she dispensed with their any longer attendance, untill it should be Supper time.

Every one commended the Queenes appointment, allowing it to rellish of good wit and judgement: and being all risen, fell to such exercises as they pleased. The Ladies made Nosegaies and Chaplets of Flowers, the men played on their Instruments, singing divers sweete Ditties to them, and thus were busied untill Supper time. Which beeing come, and they supping about the beautifull Fountaine: after Supper, they fell to singing and dauncing. In the end, the Queene, to imitate the order of her predecessors, commanded Pamphilus, that notwithstanding all the excellent songs formerly sung: he should now sing one, whereunto dutifully obeying, thus he began.

THE SONG

THE CHORUS SUNG BY ALL

Love, I found such felicitie,
And joy, in thy captivitie:
As I before did never prove,
And thought me happy, being in Love.

Comfort abounding in my hart,
Joy and Delight
In soule and spright
I did possesse in every part;
O Soveraigne Love by thee.
Thy Sacred fires,
Fed my desires,
And still aspires,
Thy happy thrall to bee.
Love, I found such felicity, etc.

My Song wants power to relate,
The sweets of minde
Which I did finde
In that most blissefull state,
O Soveraigne Love by thee.
No sad despaire,
Or killing care
Could me prepare;
Still thou didst comfort me.
Love, I found such felicity, etc.

I hate all such as do complaine,
Blaspheming thee
With Cruelty,
And sleights of coy disdaine.
O Soveraigne Love, to mee
Thou has bene kinde:
If others finde
Thee worse inclinde,
Yet I will honour thee.

Love, I found such felicitie,
And joy in thy Captivitie:
As I before did never prove,
But thought me happie, being in Love.

Thus the Song of Pamphilus ended, whereto all the rest (as a Chorus) answered with their Voyces, yet every one particularly (according as they felt their Love-sicke passions) made a curious construction thereof, perhaps more then they needed, yet not Divining what Pamphilus intended. And although they were transported with variety of imaginations; yet none of them could arive at his true meaning indeed. Wherefore the Queene, perceiving the Song to be fully ended, and the Ladies, as also the young Gentlemen, willing to go take their rest: she commaunded them severally to their Chambers.

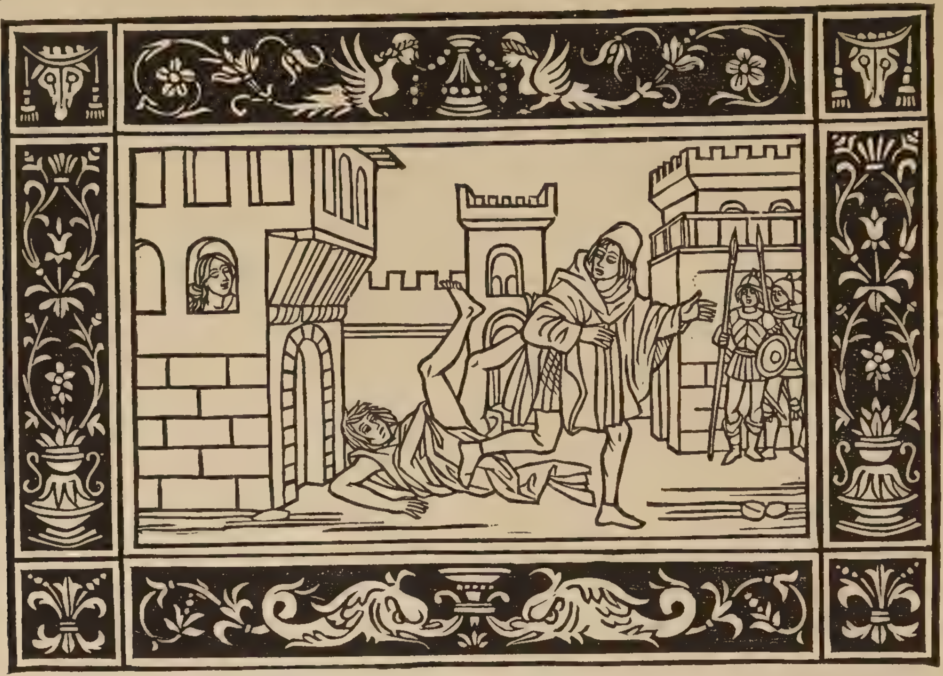
THE INDUCTION TO THE NINTH DAY

WHEREON, UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF MADAME ÆMILLIA, THE ARGUMENT OF EACH SEVERALL DISCOURSE, IS NOT LIMITTED TO ANY ONE PECULIAR SUBJECT: BUT EVERY ONE REMAINETH AT LIBERTY, TO SPEAK OF WHATSOEVER THEMSELVES BEST PLEASETH.

FAIRE Aurora, from whose bright and chearefull lookes, the duskie darke night flyeth as an utter enemy, had already reached so high as the eight Heaven, converting it all into an Azure colour, and the pretty Flowrets beganne to spred open their Leaves: when Madame Æmillia, beeing risen, caused all her female attendants, and the yong Gentlemen likewise, to be summoned for their personall appearance. Who being all come, the Queen leading the way, and they following her Majesticke pace, walked into a little Wood, not farre off distant from the Palace.

Where the Queen, looking on Madam Philomena, gave her the honor of beginning the first Novell for that day: whereto shee dutifully condiscending, began as followeth.

THE NINTH DAY, THE FIRST NOVELL



APPROVING, THAT CHASTE AND HONEST WOMEN, OUGHT RATHER TO DENY IMPORTUNATE SUITERS, BY SUBTILE AND INGENIOUS MEANES, THEN FALL INTO THE DANGER OF SCANDALL AND SLANDER.

MADAM *Francesca, a Widdow of Pistoya, being affected by two Florentine Gentlemen, the one named Rinuccio Palermini, and the other Alessandro Chiarmontesi, and she bearing no good will to eyther of them; ingeniously freed her selfe from both their importunate suites. One of them she caused to lye as dead in a grave, and the other to fetch him from thence: so neither of them accomplishing what they were enjoyned, fayled of obtaining his hoped expectation.*

MADAME, it can no way discontent mee (seeing it is your most gracious pleasure) that I should have the honour, to breake the first staffe of freedome in this faire company (according to the injunction of your Majesty) for liberty of our own best liking arguments: wherein I dismay not (if I can speake well enough) but to please you all as well, as any other that is to follow me. Nor am I so oblivious (worthy Ladies) but full well I remember, that many times hath bene related in our passed demonstrations, how mighty and variable the powers of love are: and yet I cannot be perswaded, that they have all bene so sufficiently spoken of, but something may bee further added, and the bottome of them never dived into, although we should sit arguing a whole yeare together. And because it hath beene alreadie approved, that Lovers have bene led into divers accidents, not onely inevitable dangers of death, but also have entred into the verie houses of the dead, thence to convey their amorous friends: I purpose to acquaint you with a Novell, beside them which have bene discoursed; whereby you may not onely comprehend the power of Love, but also the wisedome used by an honest Gentlewoman, to rid her selfe of two importunate suiters, who loved her against her owne liking, yet neither of them knowing the others affection.

In the City of Pistoya, there dwelt sometime a beautifull Gentlewoman, being a Widdow, whom two of our Florentines (the one named Rinuccio Palermini, and the other Alessandro Chiarmontesi, having withdrawne themselves to Pistoya) desperately affected, the one ignorant of the others intention, but each carrying his case closely, as hoping to be possessed of her. This Gentlewoman, named Madame Francesca de Lazzari, being often solicited by their messages, and troublesomely pestered with their importunities: at last (lesse advisedly then she intended) shee granted admittance to heare either of them speake. Which she repenting, and coveting to be rid of them both, a matter not easie to be done: she wittily devised the onely meanes, namely, to move such a motion to them, as neither would willingly undertake, yet within the compasse of possibility; but they failing in the performance, shee might have the more honest occasion, to bee free from all further mollestation by them, and her politike intention was thus projected.

On the same day, when she devised this peece of service, a man was buried in Pistoya, and in the Church-yard belonging unto the gray Friars, who being descended of good and worthie parentage: yet himselfe was very infamous, and reputed to be the vilest man living, not onely there in Pistoya, but throughout the whole World beside. Moreover, while he lived, he had such a strange mishapen body, and his face so ugly deformed, that such as knew him not, would stand gastly affrighted at the first sight of him. In regarde whereof, shee considered with her selfe, that the foule deformitie of this loathed fellow, would greatly avayle in her determination, and consulting with her Chamber-maid, thus she spake.

Thou knowest (my most true and faithfull servant) what trouble and affliction of minde I suffer dayly, by the messages and Letters of the two Florentines, Rinuccio and Alessandro, how hatefull their importunity is to me, as being utterly unwilling to hear them speake, or yeeld to any thing which they desire. Wherefore, to free my selfe from them both together, I have devised (in regard of their great and liberall offers) to make trial of them in such a matter, as I am assured they will never performe.

It is not unknowne to thee, that in the Church-yard of the Gray Friars, and this instant morning, Scannadio (for so was the ugly fellow named) was buried; of whom, when he was living, as also now being dead, both men, women, and children, doe yet stand in feare, so gastly and dreadfull alwayes was his personall appearance to them. Wherefore, first of all go thou to Alessandro, and say to him thus. My Mistris Francesca hath sent me to you, to tell you, that now the time is come, wherein you may deserve to enjoy her love, and gaine the possession of her person, if you will accomplish such a motion as she maketh to you. For some especiall occasion, wherewith hereafter you shall bee better acquainted, a neere Kinsman of hers, must needs have the body of Scannadio (who was buried this morning) brought to her house. And she, being as much affraid of him now he is dead, as when he was living, by no meanes would have his body brought thither.

In which respect, as a Token of your unfeigned love to her, and the latest service you shall ever do for her: shee earnestly entreateth you, that this night, in the very deadest time thereof, you would go to the grave, where Scannadio lyeth yet uncovered with earth untill to morrow, and attyring your selfe in his garments, even as if you were the man himselfe, so to remaine there untill her kinsman doe come.

Then, without speaking any one word, let him take you foorth of the grave, and bring you thence (insted of Scannadio) to hir house: where she will give you gentle welcome, and disappoint her Kinsman in his hope, by making you Lord of her, and all that is hers, as afterward shall plainly appeare. If he say he wil do it, it is as much as I desire: but if hee trifle and make deniall, then boldly tell him, that he must refraine all places wheresoever I am, and forbeare to send me any more Letters, or messages.

Having done so, then repaire to Rinuccio Palermini, and say. My Mistresse Francesca is ready to make acceptance of your love; provided, that you will do one thing for her sake. Namely, this ensuing night, in the midst and stillest season thereof, to go to the grave where Scannadio was this morning buried, and (without making any noise) or speaking one word, whatsoever you shall heare or see: to take him forth of the grave, and bring him home to her house, wher you shal know the reason of this strange businesse, and enjoy her freely as your owne for ever. But if he refuse to do it, then I commaund him, never hereafter to see me, or move further suite unto mee, by any meanes whatsoever.

The Chamber-maide went to them both, and delivered the severall messages from her Mistresse, according as she had given her in charge; whereunto each of them answered, that they woulde (for her sake) not onely descend into a Grave, but also into hell, if it were her pleasure.

She returning with this answer unto her Mistresse, Francesca remained in expectation, what the issue of these fond attemptes in them, would sort unto. When night was come, and the middle houre thereof already past, Alessandro Chiarmontesi, having put off all other garments to his doublet and hose; departed secretly from his lodging, walking towards the Church-yard, where Scannadio lay in his grave: but by the way as he went, hee became surprized with divers dreadfull conceites and imaginations, and questioned with himselfe thus.

What a beast am I? What a businesse have I undertaken? And whither am I going? What do I know, but that the Kinsman unto this Woman, perhappes understanding mine affection to her, and crediting some such matter, as is nothing so: hath laide this politicke traine for me, that he may murther me in the grave? Which (if it should so happen) my life is lost, and yet the occasion never knowne whereby it was done. Or what know I, whether some secret enemy of mine (affecting her in like manner, as I do) have devised this stratagem (out of malice) against mee, to draw my life in danger, and further his owne good Fortune? Then, contrary motions, overswaying these suspitions, he questioned his thoughts in another nature.

Let me (quoth he) admit the case, that none of these surmises are intended, but her Kinsman (by and in this manner devised) must bring me into her house: I am not therefore perswaded, that he or they do covet, to have the body of Scannadio, either to carry it thither, or present it to her, but rather do aime at some other end. May not I conjecture, that my close murthering is purposed, and this way acted, as on him that (in his life time) had offended them? The Maid hath straitly charged me, that whatsoever is said or done unto me, I am not to speake a word. What if they pul out mine eies, teare out my teeth, cut off my hands, or do me any other mischiefe: Where am I then? Shall all these extremities barre me of speaking? On the other side, if I speake, then I shall be knowne, and so much the sooner (perhaps) be abused. But admit that I sustaine no injurie at all, as being guilty of no transgression: yet (perchance) I shall not be carried to her house, but to some other baser place, and afterward she shall reprove me, that I did not accomplish what shee commanded, and so all my labour is utterly lost.

Perplexed with these various contradicting opinions, he was willing divers times to turne home backe againe: yet such was the violence of his love, and the power thereof prevailing against all sinister arguments; as he went to the grave, and removing the boordes covering it, whereinto he entred; and having despoiled Scannadio of his garments, cloathed himselfe with them, and so laid him down, having first covered the grave againe. Not long had hee tarryed there, but he began to bethinke him, what manner of man Scannadio was, and what strange reports had bene noised of him, not onely for ransacking dead mens graves in the night season, but many other abhominable Villanies committed by him, which so fearfully assaulted him; that his haire stoode on end, every member of him quaked, and every minute he imagined Scannadio rising, with intent to strangle him in the grave. But his fervent affection overcomming all these idle feares, and lying stone still, as if he had beene the dead man indeede; he remained to see the end of his hope.

On the contrary side, after midnight was past, Rinuccio Palermini departed from his lodging, to do what hee was enjoyned by his hearts Mistresse, and as hee went along, divers considerations also ran in his minde, concerning occasions possible to happen. As, falling into the hands of Justice, with the body of Scannadio upon his backe, and being condemned for sacriledge, in robbing graves of the dead; either to be burned, or otherwise so punished, as might make him hatefull to his best friends, and meerely a shame to himselfe.

Many other the like conceits mollested him, sufficient to alter his former determination: but affection was much more prevayling in him, and made him use this consultation. How now Rinuccio? Wilt thou dare to deny the first request, being mooved to thee by a Gentlewoman, whom thou dearly lovest, and is the onely meanes, whereby to gaine assurance of her gracious favour? Undoubtedly, were I sure to die in the attempt, yet I will accomplish my promise. And so he went on with courage to the grave.

Alessandro hearing his arrivall, and also the removall of the bords, although he was exceedingly affraid; yet he lay quietly stil, and stirred not, and Rinuccio beeing in the grave, tooke Alessandro by the feete, haling him forth, and (mounting him uppon his backe) went on thus loden, towards the house of Madam Francesca. As he passed along the streets, unseene or unmet by any, Alessandro suffered many shrewd rushings and punches, by turnings at the streets corners, and jolting against bulkes, poasts, and stalles, which Rinuccio could not avoyd, in regard the night was so wonderfully darke, as hee could not see which way he went.

Being come somewhat neere to the Gentlewomans house, and she standing readie in the Window with her Maide, to see when Rinuccio should arrive there with Alessandro, provided also of an apt excuse, to send them thence like a couple of Coxcombes; it fortuned, that the Watchmen, attending there in the same streete, for the apprehension of a banished man, stolne into the City contrarie to order; hearing the trampling of Rinuccioes feete, directed their course as they heard the noise, having their Lanthorne and light closely covered, to see who it should be, and what he intended, and beating their weapons against the ground, demanded, Who goes there? Rinuccio knowing their voyces, and that now was no time for any long deliberation: let fall Alessandro, and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him.

Alessandro being risen againe (although he was cloathed in Scannadioes Garments, which were long and too bigge for him) fledde away also as Rinuccio did. All which Madame Francesca easily discerned by helpe of the Watchmens Lanthorne, and how Rinuccio carried Alessandro on his backe, beeing attired in the Garments of

Scannadio: whereat she mervailed not a litle, as also the great boldnesse of them both. But in the midst of her mervailing, she laughed very heartily, when she saw the one let the other fall, and both to runne away so manfully. Which accident pleasing her beyond all comparison, and applauding her good Fortune, to bee so happily delivered from their daily mollestation: she betooke her selfe to hir Chamber with the Maide, avouching solemnly to her, that (questionlesse) they both affected her dearely, having undertaken such a straunge imposition, and verie neere brought it to a finall conclusion.

Rinuccio, being sadly discontented, and curssing his hard fortune, would not yet returne home to his Lodging: but, when the watch was gone forth of that streete, came backe to the place where he let fall Alessandro, purposing to accomplish the rest of his enterprize. But not finding the body, and remaining fully perswaded, that the Watchmen were possessed thereof; hee went away, greeving extreamly. And Alessandro, not knowing now what should become of him: confounded with the like griefe and sorrow, that all his hope was thus utterly overthrowne, retired thence unto his owne house, not knowing who was the Porter which carried him.

The next morning, the grave of Scannadio being found open, and the body not in it, because Alessandro had thrown it into a deep ditch neere adjoyning: all the people of Pistoya were possessed with sundry opinions, some of the more foolish sort verily beleeving, that the divell had caried away the dead body. Neverthelesse, each of the Lovers severally made knowne to Madam Francesca, what he had done, and how disappointed, either excusing himselfe, that though her command had not bin fully accomplished, yet to continue her favour towards him. But she, like a wise and discreet Gentlewoman, seeming not to credit either the one or other: discharged her selfe honestly of them both, with a cutting answere, That shee would never (afterward) expect any other service from them, because they had fayled in their first injunction.

THE SECOND NOVELL

WHEREBY IS DECLARED, THAT WHOSOEVER IS DESIROUS TO REPREHEND SINNE IN OTHER MEN, SHOULD FIRST EXAMINE HIMSELFE, THAT HE BE NOT GUILTIE OF THE SAME CRIME.

Madame *Usimbalda, Lady Abbesse of a Monastery of Nuns in Lombardie, arising hastily in the night time without a Candle, to take one of her Daughter Nunnes in bed with a yong Gentleman, whereof she was enviously accused, by certaine of her other Sisters: The Abbesse her selfe (being at the same time in bed with a Priest) imagining to have put on her head her plaited vayle, put on the Priests breeches. Which when the poore Nunne perceyved; by causing the Abbesse to see her owne error, she got her selfe to be absolved, and had the freer liberty afterward, to be more familiar with her frend, then formerly she had bin.*

By this time, Madame Philomena sate silent, and the wit of Francesca, in freeing her selfe from them whom she could not fancie, was generally commended: as also on the contrary, the bold presumption of the two amorous suiters, was reputed not to be love, but meerely folly. And then the Queene, with a gracious admonition, gave way foı Madam Eliza to follow next; who presently thus began.

Worthy Ladies, Madame Francesca delivered her selfe discreetly from trouble, as already hath bin related: but a yong Nun, by the helpe and favour of Fortune, did also free her selfe (in speaking advisedly) from an inconvenience sodainly falling on her. And as you well know, there wants none of them, who (like bold Bayards) will be very forward in checking other mens misdemeanors, when themselves, as my Novell will approve, deserve more justly to bee corrected. As hapned to a Lady Abbesse, under whose governement the same young Nunne was, of whom I am now to speake.

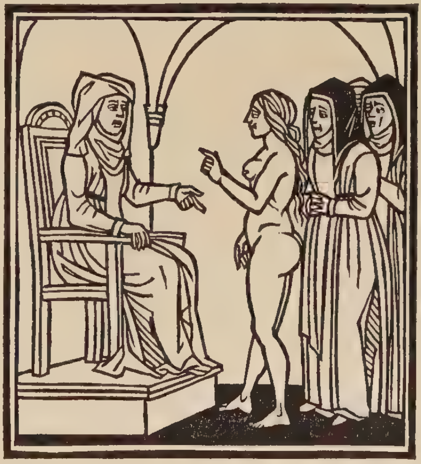
You are then to understand (Gracious Auditors) that in Lombardie there was a goodly Monastery, very famous for Holinesse and Religion, where, among other sanctified Sisters, there was a yong Gentlewoman, endued with very singular beautie, being named Isabella, who on a day, when a Kinsman of hers came to see her at the grate, became enamored of a young Gentleman, being then in his company.

He likewise, beholding her to be so admirably beautifull, and conceyving by the pretty glances of her eye, that they appeared to bee silent intelligencers of the hearts meaning, grew also as affectionately inclined towards her, and this mutuall love continued thus concealed a long while, but not without great affliction unto them both. In the end, either of them being circumspect and provident enough, the Gentleman contrived a meanes, whereby he might secretly visite his Nunne, wherewith she seemed no way discontented: and this visitation was not for once or twice, but verie often, and closely concealed to themselves.

At length it came to passe, that either through their owne indiscreete carriage, or jelous suspition in some others: it was espied by one of the Sisters, both the Gentlemans comming and departing, yet unknowne to him or Isabella. The saide Sister, disclosing the same to two or three more: they agreed together, to reveale it to the Lady Abbesse, who was named Madame Usimbalda, a holy and devout Lady, in common opinion of all the Nunnes, and whosoever else knew her.

They further concluded (because Isabella should not deny theyr accusation) to contrive the businesse so cunningly: that the Ladie Abbesse should come her selfe in person, and take the yong Gentleman in bed with the Nun. And uppon this determination, they agreed to watch nightly by turnes, because by no meanes they wold be prevented: so to surprise poore Isabella, who beeing ignorant of their treachery, suspected nothing. Presuming thus still on this secret felicitie, and fearing no disaster to befall her: it chaunced (on a night) that the yong Gentleman being entred into the Nuns Dorter, the Scowts had descried him, and intended to be revenged on her.

After some part of the night was overpast, they divided themselves into two bands, one to guard Isabellaes Dorter doore, the other to carry newes to the Abbesse, and knocking at her Closet doore, saide. Rise quickely Madame, and use all the hast you may, for we have seene a man enter our Sister Isabellaes Dorter, and you may take her in bed with him. The Lady Abbesse, who (the very same night) had the company of a lusty Priest in bed with her selfe, as oftentimes before she had, and he being alwayes brought thither in a Chest: hearing



these tidings, and fearing also, lest the Nunnes hastie knocking at her doore, might cause it to fly open, and so (by their entrance) have her owne shame discovered: arose very hastily, and thinking she had put on her plaited vaile, which alwayes she walked with in the night season, and used to tearme her Psalter; she put the Priests breeches upon her head, and so went away in all hast with them, supposing them verily to be her Psalter: but making fast the Closet doore with her keye, because the Priest should not be discovered.

Away shee went in all haste with the Sisters, who were so forward in the detection of poore Isabella, as they never regarded what manner of vaile the Lady Abbesse wore on her head. And being come to the Dorter doore, quickly they lifted it off from the hookes, and being entred, found the two Lovers sweetly imbracing: but yet so amazed at this sudden surprisall, as they durst not stirre, nor speake one word. The young Nunne Isabella, was raised forthwith by the other Sisters, and according as the Abbesse had comanded, was brought by them into the Chapter-house: the yong Gentleman remaining still in the Chamber, where he put on his garments, awaiting to see the issue of this businesse, and verily intending to act severe revenge on his betrayers, if any harme were done to Isabella, and afterward to take her thence away with him, as meaning to make her amends by marriage.

The Abbesse being seated in the Chapter house, and all the other Nunnes then called before her, who minded nothing else but the poore offending Sister: she began to give her very harsh and vile speeches, as never any transgressor suffered the like, and as to her who had (if it should be openly knowne abroad) contaminated by her lewde life and actions, the sanctity and good renowne of the whole Monastery, and threatned her with very severe chastisement. Poore Isabella, confounded with feare and shame, as being no way able to excuse her fault, knew not what answer to make, but standing silent, made her case compassionable to all the rest, even those hard-hearted Sisters which betrayed her.

And the Abbesse still continuing her harsh speeches, it fortuned, that Isabella raising her head, which before she dejected into hir bosome, espied the breeches on her head, with the stockings hanging on either side of her; the sight whereof did so much encourage her, that boldly she said. Madam, let a poore offender advise you for to mend your veile, and afterward say to me what you will.

The Abbesse being very angry; and not understanding what she meant, frowningly answered. Why how now saucy companion? What vaile are you prating of? Are you so malapert, to bee chatting already? Is the deed you have done, to-be answered in such immodest manner? Isabella not a jot danted by her sterne behaviour, once againe said. Good Madam let me perswade you to sette your vaile right, and then chide me as long as you will. At these words, all the rest of the Nunnes exalted their lookes, to behold what vaile the Abbesse wore on her head, wherewith Isabella should finde such fault, and she her selfe lift up her hand to feele it: and then they all perceyved plainly, the reason of Isabellas speeches, and the Abbesse saw her owne error.

Hereupon, when the rest observed, that she had no help to cloud this palpable shame withall, the tide began to turne, and hir tongue found another manner of Language, then her former fury to poore Isabella, growing to this conclusion, that it is impossible to resist against the temptations of the flesh. And therefore she saide: Let all of you take occasion, according as it offereth it selfe, as both we and our predecessors have done: to be provident for your selves, take time while you may, having this sentence alwaies in remembrance, *Si non caste, tamen caute.*

So, having granted the yong Nunne Isabella free absolution: the Lady Abbesse returned backe againe to bed to the Priest, and Isabella to the Gentleman. As for the other Sisters, who (as yet) were without the benefit of friends; they intended to provide themselves so soone as they could, being enduced thereto by so good example.

THE THIRD NOVELL

DISCOVERING THE SIMPLICITY OF SOME SILLY WITTED MEN, AND HOW EASIE A MATTER IT IS TO ABUSE AND BEGUILE THEM.

MASTER *Simon the Physitian, by the perswasions of Bruno, Buffalmaco, and a third Companion, named Nello, made Calandrino to beleeve, that he was conceived great with childe. And having Physicke ministred to him for the disease: they got both good fatte Capons and money of him, and so cured him, without any other manner of deliverance.*

AFTER that Madame Eliza had concluded her Novell, and every one of the company given thankes to Fortune, for delivering poore Isabella the faire young Nunne, from the bitter reprehensions of the as faulty Abbesse, as also the malice of her envious Sisters; the Queene gave command unto Philostratus, that he should be the next in order, and hee (without expecting anie other warning) began in this manner.

Faire Ladies, the paltry Judge of the Marquisate, whereof yesterday I made relation to you; hindred mee then of another Novell, concerning silly Calandrino, wherewith I purpose now to acquaint you. And because whatsoever hath already bin spoken of him, tended to no other end but matter of meriment, hee and his companions duly considered: the Novel which I shal now report, keepeth within the selfesame compasse, and aimeth also at your contentment, according to the scope of imposed variety.

You have already heard what manner of man Calandrino was, and likewise the rest of his pleasant Companions, who likewise are now againe to be remembred, because they are actors in our present discourse. It came so to passe, that an Aunt of Calandrinoes dying, left him a legacy of two hundred Florines, wherewith he purposed to purchase some small Farme-house in the countrey, or else to enlarge the other, whereof he was possessed already. And, as if hee were to disburse some ten thousand Florines, there was not a Broker in all Florence, but understood what he intended to doe: and all the worst was, that the strings of his purse could stretch no higher. Bruno, and Buffalmaco (his auncient Confederates) who heard of this good Fortune befalne him, advised him in such manner as they were wont to do; allowing it much better for him, to make merrie with the money in good cheare among them, then to lay it out in paltry Land, whereto he would not by any meanes listen, but ridde himselfe of them with a dinners cost, as loath to bee at anie further charge with them.

These merry Laddes meant not to leave him so; but sitting one day in serious consultation, and a third man in their companie, named Nello; they all three layde their braines in steep, by what means to wash their mouths well, and Calandrino to bee at the cost thereof.

And having resolved what was to bee done, they met togither the next morning, even as Calandrino was comming foorth of his house, and sundering themselves, to avoyd all suspition, yet beeing not farre distant each from other; Nello first met him, and saide unto him, Good Morrow Calandrino: which he requited backe agayne with the same salutation. But then Nello standing still, looked him stedfastly in the face: whereat Calandrino mervailing, sayd. Nello, Why dost thou behold me so advisedly? Whereunto Nello answered, saying Hast thou felt any paine this last night past? Thou lookest nothing so well, as thou didst yesterday. Calandrino began instantly to wax doubtfull, and replyed thus. Dost thou see any alteration in my face, whereby to imagine, I should feele some paine? In good faith Calandrino (quoth Nello) me thinks thy countenance is strangely changed, and surely it proceedeth from some great cause, and so he departed away from him.

Calandrino being very mistrustfull, scratched his head, yet felte he no grievance at all; and going still on; Buffalmaco sodainely encountred him, upon his departure from Nello, and after salutations passing betweene them; in a manner of admiration, demanded what he ayled?

Truly (quoth Calandrino) well enough to mine owne thinking, yet notwithstanding, I met with Nello but even now; and he told me, that my countenance was very much altred; Is it possible that I should bee sicke, and feele no paine or distaste in any part of me? Buffalmaco answered; I am not so skilfull in judgement, as to argue on the Nature of distemper in the body: but sure I am, that thou hast some daungerous inward impediment, because thou lookst (almost) like a man more then halfe dead.

Calandrino began presently to shake, as if hee had had a Feaver hanging on him, and then came Bruno looking fearefully on him, and before he would utter any words, seemed greatly to bemoane him, saying at length. Calandrino? Art thou the same man, or no? How wonderfully art thou changed since last I saw thee, which is no longer then yester day? I pray thee tell mee, How dooest thou feele thy health?

Calandrino hearing, that they all agreed in one opinion of him; he beganne verily to perswade himselfe, that some sodaine sicknes, had seised upon him, which they could discerne, although hee felt no anguish at all: and therefore, like a man much perplexed in minde, demanded of them, What he should do? Beleeve me Calandrino (answered Bruno) if I were worthy to give thee counsell, thou shouldst returne home presently to thy house, and lay thee downe in thy warme Bedde, covered with so many cloathes as thou canst well endure. Then to Morrow morning, send thy Water unto Learned Mayster Doctor the Physitian, who (as thou knowest) is a man of most singular skill and experience: he will instruct thee presently what is the best course to be taken, and we that have ever beene thy loving friends, will not faile thee in any thing that lieth in our power.

By this time, Nello being come againe unto them, they all returned home with Calandrino unto his owne house, whereinto he entering very faintly, hee saide to his Wife: Woman, make my Bed presently ready, for I feele my selfe to be growne extreamely sicke, and see that thou layest cloathes enow upon me. Being thus laide in his Bedde, they left him for that night, and returned to visite him againe the verie next morning, by which time, he had made a reservation of his Water, and sent it by a young Damosell unto Maister Doctor, who dwelt then in the olde market place, at the signe of the Muske Mellone. Then saide Bruno unto his Companions; Abide you heere to keepe him company, and I will walke along to the Physitian, to understand what he will say: and if neede be, I can procure him to come hither with me. Calandrino very kindely accepted his offer, saying withall. Well Bruno, thou shewst thy selfe a friend in the time of necessity, I pray thee know of him, how the case stands with me, for I feele a very strange alteration within mee, far beyond ali compasse of my conceite.

Bruno being gone to the Physitian, he made such expedition, that he arrived there before the Damosell, who carried the Water, and informed Master Simon with the whole tricke intended: wherefore, when the Damosell was come, and hee had passed his judgement concerning the water, he said to her.

Maide, go home againe, and tell Calandrino, that he must keep himselfe very warme: and I my selfe will instantly be with him, to enstruct him further in the quality of his sicknesse.

The Damosell delivered her message accordingly, and it was not long before Mayster Doctor Simon came, with Bruno also in his company, and sitting downe on the beds side by Calandrino, hee began to taste his pulse, and within a small while after, his Wife being come into the Chamber, he said. Observe me well Calandrino, for I speake to thee in the nature of a true friend; thou hast no other disease, but only thou art great with child.

So soone as Calandrino heard these words, in dispairing manner he beganne to rage, and cry out aloud, saying to his wife. Ah thou wicked woman, this is long of thee, and thou hast done me this mischeefe: for alwayes thou wilt be upon me, ever railing at mee, and fighting, untill thou hast gotten me under thee. Say thou divellish creature, do I not tell thee true? The Woman, being of verie honest and civill conversation, hearing her husband speake so foolishly: blushing with shame, and hanging downe her head in bashfull manner; without returning any answer, went forth of her Chamber.

Calandrino continuing still in his angry humour, wringing his hands, and beating them upon his breast, said: Wretched man that I am, What shall I do? How shal I be delivered of this child? Which way can it come from me into the world? I plainly perceyve, that I am none other then a dead man, and all through the wickednesse of my Wife: heaven plague her with as many mischiefes, as I am desirous to finde ease. Were I now in as good health, as heeretofore I have beene, I would rise out of my bed, and never cease beating her, untill I had broken her in a thousand peeces. But if Fortune will be so favourable to me, as to helpe mee out of this dangerous agony: hang me, if ever she get me under her againe, or make me such an Asse, in having the mastery over mee, as diuers times she hath done.

Bruno, Buffalmaco and Nello, hearing these raving speeches of Calandrino, were swolne so bigge with laughter, as if their ribbes would have burst in sunder; neverthelesse, they abstained so well as they were able; but Doctor Simon gaped so wide with laughing as one might easily have pluckt out all his teeth. In the end, because he could tarry there no longer, but was preparing to depart: Calandrino thanked him for his paines, requesting that hee would be carefull of him, in aiding him with his best advise and counsell, and he would not be unmindfull of him. Honest neighbour Calandrino, answered the Phisition, I would not have you to torment your selfe, in such an impatient and tempestuous manner, because I perceive the time so to hasten on, as we shall soone perceive (and that within very few dayes space) your health well restored, and without the sense of much paine; but indeed it wil cost expences. Alas Sir, said Calandrino, mak not any spare of my purse, to procure that I may have safe deliverance. I have two hundred Florines, lately falne to me by the death of mine Aunt, wherewith I intended to purchase a Farme in the Countrey: take them all if need be, onely reserving some few for my lying in Childbed. And then Master Doctor, Alas, I know not how to behave my selfe, for I have heard the grievous complaint of women in that case, oppressed with bitter pangs and throwes; as questionlesse they will bee my death, except you have the greater care of me.

Be of good cheere neighbour Calandrino, replyed Doctor Simon, I will provide an excellent distilled drinke for you, marveilously pleasing in taste, and of soveraigne vertue, which will resolve all in three mornings, making you as whole and as sound as a Fish newly spawned. But you must have an especiall care afterward, being providently wise, least you fall into the like follies againe. Concerning the preparation of this precious drinke, halfe a dozen of Capons, the very fairest and fattest, I must make use of in the distillation: what other things shall bee imployed beside, you may deliver forty Florines to one of these your honest friends, to see all the necessaries bought and sent me home to my house. Concerning my businesse, make you no doubt thereof, for I will have all distilled against to morrow, and then doe you drinke a great Glasse full every morning, fresh and fasting next your heart. Calandrino was highly pleased with his words, returning master Doctor infinite thankes, and referring all to his disposing. And having given forty Florines to Bruno, with other money beside, to buy the halfe dozen of Capons: he thought himselfe greatly beholding to them all, and protested to requite their kindenesse.

Master Doctor being gone home to his house, made ready a bottel of very excellent Hypocrasse, which he sent the next day according to his promise: and Bruno having bought the Capons, with other junkets, fit for the turne, the Phisitian and his merry Companions, fed on them hartely for the givers sake. As for Calandrino, he liked his dyet drinke excellently well, quaffing a large Glassefull off three mornings together: afterward Master Doctor and the rest came to see him, and having felt his pulse, the Phisition said. Calandrino, thou art now as sound in health, as any man in all Florence can be: thou needest not to keepe within doores any longer, but walke abroad boldly, for all is well and the childe gone.

Calandrino arose like a joyfull man, and walked daily through the streets, in the performance of such affaires as belonged to him: and every acquaintance he met withall, he told the condition of his sudden sickenesse; and what a rare cure Master Doctor Simon had wrought on him, delivering him (in three dayes space) of a childe, and without the feeling of any paine. Bruno, Buffalmaco, and Nello, were not a little jocond, for meeting so well with covetous Calandrino: but how the Wife liked the folly of her Husband, I leave to the judgement of all good Women.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

SERVING AS AN ADMONITION TO ALL MEN, FOR TAKING GAMESTERS AND DRUNKARDS INTO THEIR SERVICE.

FRANCESCO *Fortarigo, played away all that he had at Buonconvento, and likewise the money of Francesco Aniolliero, being his Master. Then running after him in his shirt, and avouching that hee had robbed him: he caused him to be taken by Pezants of the Country, clothed himselfe in his Masters wearing garments, and (mounted on his horse) rode thence to Sienna, leaving Aniolliero in his shirt, and walked barefooted.*

THE ridiculous words given by Calandrino to his Wife, all the whole company hartily laughed at: but Philostratus ceassing, Madame Neiphila (as it pleased the Queene to appoint) began to speake thus. Vertuous Ladies, if it were not more hard and uneasie for men, to make good their understanding and vertue, then apparant publication of their disgrace and folly; many would not labour in vaine, to curbe in their idle speeches with a bridle, as you have manifestly observed by the weake wit of Calandrino. Who needed no such fantastick circumstance, to cure the strange disease, which he imagined (by sottish perswasions) to have: had hee not been so lavish of his tongue, and accused his Wife of overmastering him. Which maketh me remember a Novell, quite contrary to this last related, namely, how one man may strive to surmount another in malice; yet he to sustaine the greater harme, that had (at the first) the most advantage of his enemy, as I will presently declare unto you.

There dwelt in Sienna, and not many yeeres since, two young men of equall age, both of them bearing the name of Francesco: but the one was descended of the Aniollieri, and the other likewise of the Fortarigi; so that they were commonly called Aniolliero, and Fortarigo, both Gentlemen, and well derived. Now, although in many other matters, their complexions did differ very much: Yet notwithstanding, they varied not in one bad qualitie, namely too great neglect of their Fathers, which caused their more frequent conversation, as very familiar and respective friends. But Aniolliero (being a very goodly and faire conditioned young Gentleman) apparently perceiving, that he could not maintaine himselfe at Sienna, in such estate as he liked, and upon the pension allowed him by his Father, hearing also, that at the Marquisate of Ancona, there lived the Popes Legate, a worthy Cardinall, his much indeared good Lord and friend: he intended to goe visite him, as hoping to advance his fortunes by him.

Having acquainted his Father with this determination, he concluded with him, to have that from him in a moment which might supply his wants for many moneths, because he would be clothed gallantly, and mounted honourably. And seeking for a servant necessary to attend on him, it chanced that Fortarigo hearing thereof, came presently to Aniolliero, intreating him in the best manner he could, to let him waite on him as his serving man, promising both dutiful and diligent attendance: yet not to demaund any other wages, but onely payment of his ordinary expences. Aniolliero made him answere, that he durst not give him entertainment, not in regard of his insufficiency, and unaptnesse for service: but because he was a great Gamester, and divers times would be beastly drunke? whereto Fortarigo replyed that hee would refraine from both those foule vices, and addict all his endeavor wholly to please him, without just taxation of any grosse errour; making such solemne vowes and protestations beside, as conquered Aniolliero, and won his consent.

Being entred upon his journey, and arriving in a morning at Buonconvento, there Aniolliero determined to dine, and afterward, finding the heate to be unfit for travaile; he caused a bed to be prepared, wherein being laid to rest by the helpe of Fortarigo, he gave him charge, that after the heates violence was overpast, hee should not faile to call and awake him. While Aniolliero slept thus in his bed, Fortarigo, never remembring his solemne vowes and promises: went to the Taverne, where having drunke indifferently, and finding company fit for the purpose, he fell to play at the dice with them. In a very short while, he had not onely lost his money, but all the cloathes on his backe likewise, and coveting to recover his losses againe; naked in his shirt, he went to Aniollieroes Chamber, where finding him yet soundly sleeping, he tooke all the money he had in his purse, and then returned backe to play, speeding in the same manner as hee did before, not having one poore penny left him.

Aniolliero chancing to awake, arose and made him ready, without any servant to helpe him; then calling for Fortarigo, and not hearing any tydings of him: he began immediately to imagine, that he was become drunke, and so had falne asleepe in one place or other, as very often he was wont to doe. Wherefore, determining so to leave him, he caused the male and Saddle to be set on his horse, and so to furnish himselfe with a more honest servant at Corsignano.

But when hee came to pay his hoste, hee found not any penny left him: whereupon (as well he might) he grew greatly offended, and raised much trouble in the house, charged the hoasts people to have robde him, and threatening to have them sent as prisoners to Sienna. Suddenly entred Fortarigo in his shirt, with intent to have stolne Aniollieroes garments, as formerly hee did the money out of his purse, and seeing him ready to mount on horsebacke, hee saide.

How now Aniolliero? What shall we goe away so soone? I pray you Sir tarry a little while, for an honest man is comming hither, who hath my Doublet engaged for eight and thirty shillings; and I am sure that he will restore it me back for five and thirty, if I could presently pay him downe the money.

During the speeches, an other entred among them, who assured Aniolliero, that Fortarigo was the Thiefe which robde him of his money, shewing him also how much hee had lost at the Dice: Wherewith Aniolliero being much mooved, very angerly reprooved Fortarigo, and, but for feare of the Law, would have offered him outrage, thretning to have him hangd by the neck, or else condemned to the Gallies belonging to Florence, and so mounted on his horse. Fortarigo making shew to the standers by, as if Aniolliero menaced some other body, and not him, said. Come Aniolliero, I pray thee let us leave this frivilous prating, for (indeede) it is not worth a Button, and minde a matter of more importance: my Doublet will bee had againe for five and thirty shillings, if the money may bee tendered downe at this very instant, whereas if we deferre it till to morrow, perhaps hee will then have the whole eight and thirty which he lent me, and he doth me this pleasure, because I am ready (at another time) to affoord him the like courtesie; why then should we loose three shillings, when they may so easily be saved.

Aniolliero hearing him speake in such confused manner, and perceiving also, that they which stood gazing by, beleeved (as by their lookes appeared) that Fortarigo had not played away his Masters mony at the Dice, but rather that he had some stocke of Fortarigoes in his custody; angerly answered; Thou sawcy companion, what have I to doe with thy Doublet? I would thou wert hangd, not only for playing away my money, but also by delaying thus my journey, and yet boldly thou standest out-facing mee, as if I were no better then thy fellow. Fortarigo held on still his former behaviour, without using any respect or reverence to Aniolliero, as if all the accusations did not concerne him, but saying, Why should wee not take the advantage of three shillings profit? Thinkest thou, that I am not able to doe as much for thee? why, lay out so much money for my sake, and make no more haste then needs we must, because we have day-light enough to bring us (before night) to Torreniero. Come, draw thy purse, and pay the money, for upon mine honest word, I may enquire throughout all Sienna, and yet not find such another Doublet as this of mine is. To say then, that I should leave it, where it now lyeth pawned, and for eight and thirty shillings, when it is richly more worth then fifty, I am sure to suffer a double endammagement thereby.

You may well imagine, that Aniolliero was now enraged beyond all patience, to see himselfe both robde of his money, and overborne with presumptuous language: wherefore, without making any more replications, he gave the spurre to his horse, and rode away towards Torreniero. Now fell Fortarigo into a more knavish intention against Aniolliero, and being very speedy in running, followed apace after him in his shirt, crying out still aloude to him all the way, to let him have his Doublet againe. Aniolliero riding on very fast, to free his eares from this idle importunity, it fortuned that Fortarigo espied divers countrey Pezants, laboring in the fields about their businesse, and by whom Aniolliero (of necessity) must passe: To them he cryed out so loude as he could; Stay the Thiefe, Stop the Thiefe, he rides away so fast, having robde me.

They being provided, some with Pronggges, Pitchforkes and Spades, and others with the like weapons fit for Husbandry, stept into the way before Aniolliero: and beleeving undoubtedly, that he had robde the man which pursued him in his shirt, stayed and apprehended him. Whatsoever Aniolliero could doe or say, prevailed not any thing with the unmannerly Clownes, but when Fortarigo was arrived among them, he braved Aniolliero most impudently, saying.

What reason have I to spoyle thy life (thou traiterous Villaine) to rob and spoyle thy Master thus on the high way? Then turning to the Countrey Boores: How much deare friends (quoth he) am I beholding to you for this unexpected kindnesse? You behold in what manner he left me in my Lodging, having first playd away all my money at the Dice, and then deceiving me of my horse and garments also: but had not you (by great good lucke) thus holpe mee to stay him; a poore Gentleman had bin undone for ever, and I should never have found him againe.

Aniolliero avouched the truth of his wrong received, but the base peazants, giving credite onely to Fortarigoes lying exclamations: tooke him from his horse, despoyled him of all his wearing apparrell, even to the very Bootes from off his Legges: suffered him to ride away from him in that manner, and Aniolliero left so in his shirt, to dance a bare foote Galliard after him either towards Sienna, or any place else.

Thus Aniolliero, purposing to visite his Cousin the Cardinal like a Gallant, and at the Marquisate of Ancona, returned backe poorly in his shirt unto Buonconvento, and durst not (for shame) repaire to Sienna. In the end, he borrowed money on the other horse which Fortarigo rode on, and remained there in the Inne, whence riding to Corsignano, where he had divers Kinsmen and Friends, he continued there so long with them, till he was better furnished from his Father.

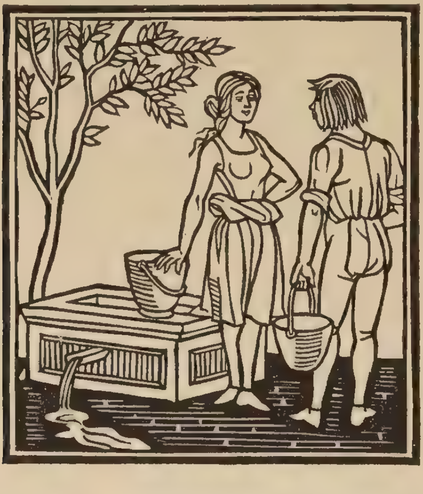
Thus you may perceive, that the cunning Villanies of Fortarigo, hindred the honest intended enterprise of Aniolliero, howbeit in fit time and place, nothing afterward was left unpunished.

THE FIFT NOVELL

IN JUST REPREHENSION OF THOSE VAINE-HEADED FOOLES, THAT ARE LED AND GOVERNED BY IDLE PERSWASIONS.

CALANDRINO *became extraordinarily enamoured of a young Damosell, named Nicholetta. Bruno prepared a Charme or writing for him, avouching constantly to him, that so soone as he touched the Damosell therewith, she should follow him whithersoever hee would have her. She being gone to an appointed place with him, hee was found there by his wife, and dealt withall according to his deserving.*

BECAUSE the Novell reported by Madame Neiphila was so soone concluded, without much laughter, or commendation of the whole Company: the Queene turned hir selfe towards Madam Fiammetta, enjoyning her to succeed in apt order; and she being as ready as sodainly commanded, began as followeth. Most gentle Ladies, I am perswaded of your opinion in judgement with mine, that there is not any thing, which can bee spoken pleasingly, except it be conveniently suited with apt time and place: in which respect, when Ladies and Gentlewomen are bent to discoursing, the due election of them both are necessarily required. And therefore I am not unmindfull, that our meeting heere (ayming at nothing more, then to outweare the time with our generall contentment) should tye us to the course of our pleasure and recreation, to the same conveniency of time and place; not sparing, though some have bin nominated oftentimes in our passed arguments; yet, if occasion serve, and the nature of variety be well considered, wee may speake of the selfesame persons againe.



Now, notwithstanding the actions of Calandrino have beene indifferently canvazed among us; yet, remembring what Philostratus not long since saide, That they intended to nothing more then matter of mirth: I presume the boldlier, to report another Novell of him, beside them already past. And, were I willing to conceale the truth, and cloath it in more circumstantiall maner: I could make use of contrary names, and paint it in a poeticall fiction, perhaps more probable, though not so pleasing. But because wandring from the truth of things, doth much diminish (in relation) the delight of the hearers: I will build boldly on my fore-alledged reason, and tel you truly how it hapned.

Niccholao Cornacchini was once a Citizen of ours, and a man of great wealth; who, among other his rich possessions in Camerata, builded there a very goodly house, which being perfected ready for painting: he compounded with Bruno and Buffalmaco, who bicause their worke required more helpe then their owne, they drew Nello and Calandrino into their association, and began to proceed in their businesse. And because there was a Chamber or two, having olde moveables in them, as Bedding, Tables, and other Houshold stuffe beside, which were in the custody of an old Woman that kepte the house, without the helpe of any other servants else, a Son unto the saide Niccholao, beeing named Phillippo, resorted thither divers times, with one or other prety Damosell in his company (in regard he was unmarried) where he would abide a day or two with her, and then convey her home againe.

At one time among the rest, it chanced that he brought a Damosell thither named Nicholetta, who was maintained by a wily companion, called Magione, in a dwelling which hee had at Camaldoli, and (indeed) no honester then she should be. She was a very beautifull young woman, wearing garments of great value, and (according to her quality) well spoken, and of commendable carriage. Comming forth of her Chamber one day, covered with a White veyle, because her haire hung loose about her, which shee went to wash at a Well in the middle Court, bathing there also her face and hands: Calandrino going (by chance) to the same Well for water, gave her a secret salutation. She kindly returning the like courtesie to him, began to observe him advisedly: more, because he looked like a man newly come thither, then any handsomnesse she perceyved in him.

Calandrino threw wanton glances at her, and seeing she was both faire and lovely, began to finde some occasion of tarrying, so that he returned not with water to his other associates, yet neither knowing her, or daring to deliver one word. She, who was not to learn her lesson in alluring, noting what affectionate regards (with bashfulnesse) he gave her: answered him more boldly with the like; but meerly in scorning manner, breathing forth divers dissembled sighs among them: so that Calandrino became foolishly inveigled with her love, and would not depart out of the Court, untill Phillippo, standing above in his Chamber window called her thence.

When Calandrino was returned backe to his businesse, he could do nothing else, but shake the head, sigh, puffe, and blowe, which being observed by Bruno (who alwayes fitted him according to his folly, as making a meer mockery of his very best behaviour) sodainly he said. Why how now Calandrino? Sigh, puffe, and blow man? What may be the reason of these unwonted qualities? Calandrino immediately answered, saying: My friendly Companion Bruno, if I had one to lend me a little helpe, I should very quickely become well enough. How? quoth Bruno, doth any thing offend thee, and wilt thou not reveale it to thy friends? Deare Bruno, said Calandrino, there is a proper handsome woman here in the house, the goodliest creature that ever any eye beheld, much fairer then the Queen of Fairies her selfe, who is so deeply falne in love with mee, as thou wouldst thinke it no lesse then a wonder; and yet I never sawe her before, till yer while when I was sent to fetch water. A very strange case, answered Bruno, take heede Calandrino, that shee bee not the lovely friend to Phillippo, our yong Master, for then it may prove a dangerous matter.

Calandrino stood scratching his head an indifferent while, and then sodainly replyed thus. Now trust me Bruno, it is to bee doubted, because he called her at his Window, and she immediatly went up to his Chamber. But what doe I care if it be so? Have not the Gods themselves bene beguiled of their Wenches, who were better men then ever Phillippo can be, and shall I stand in feare of him? Bruno replied: Be patient Calandrino, I will enquire what Woman she is, and if she be not the wife or friend to our young master Phillippo, with faire perswasions I can over-rule the matter, because shee is a familiar acquaintance of mine. But how shall wee doe, that Buffalmaco may not know heereof? I can never speake to her, if hee be in my company. For Buffalmaco (quoth Calandrino) I have no feare at all, but rather of Nello, because he is a neer Kinsman to my wife, and he is able to undo me quite, if once it should come to his hearing. Thou saist well, replyed Bruno, therefore the matter hath neede to be very cleanly carried.

Now let me tell you, the Woman was well enough knowne to Bruno, as also her quality of life, which Phillippo had acquainted him withall, and the reason of her resorting thither. Wherefore, Calandrino going forth of the roome where they wrought, onely to gaine another sight of Nicholetta, Bruno revealed the whole history to Buffalmaco and Nello; they all concluding together, how this amorous fit of the foole was to be followed. And when Calandrino was returned backe againe; in whispering maner Bruno said to him. Hast thou once more seene her? Yes, yes Bruno, answered Calandrino: Alas, she hath slaine me with her very eye, and I am no better then a dead man. Be patient said Bruno, I will goe and see whether she be the same woman which I take her for, or no: and if it prove so, then never feare, but refer the businesse unto me.

Bruno descending downe the staires, found Phillippo and Nicholetta in conference together, and stepping unto them, discoursed at large, what manner of man Calandrino was, and how farre he was falne in love with her: so that they made a merry conclusion, what should be performed in this case, onely to make a pastime of his hot begun love. And being come backe againe to Calandrino, he saide. It is the same woman whereof I told thee, and therefore wee must worke wisely in the businesse: for if Phillippo perceive any thing, all the water in Arno will hardly serve to quench his fury. But what wouldst thou have me say to her on thy behalfe, if I compasse the meanes to speake with her? First of all (quoth Calandrino) and in the prime place, tell her, that I wish infinite bushels of those blessings, which makes Maides Mothers, and begetteth children. Next, that I am onely hers, in any service she wil command me. Dooest thou understand me what I say? Sufficiently answered Bruno, leave all to me.

When supper time was come, that they gave over working, and were descended downe into the Court: there they found Phillippo and Nicholetta readily attending to expect some beginning of amorous behaviour, and Calandrino glanced such leering lookes at her, coughing and spetting with hummes and haes, yea in such close and secret manner, that a starke blinde sight might verie easily have perceyved it.

She also on the other side, returned him such queint and cunning carriage, as enflamed him farre more furiously, even as if hee were ready to leape out of himselfe. In the meane while, Phillippo, Buffalmaco and the rest that were there present, seeming as if they were seriouslie consulting together, and perceived nothing of his fantastick behavior, according as Bruno had appointed, could scarse refraine from extremity of laughter, they noted such antick trickes in Calandrino.

Having spent an indifferent space in this foppish folly, the houre of parting came, but not without wonderful affliction to Calandrino; and as they were going towards Florence, Bruno saide closely to Calandrino. I dare assure thee, that thou hast made her to consume and melt, even like ice against the warme Sunne. On my word, if thou wouldst bring thy Gitterne, and sit downe by us, singing some few amorous songs of thine owne making, when we are beneath about our businesse in the Court: shee would presently leape out of the Window, as being unable to tarry from thee.

I like thy counsell well Bruno, answered Calandrino; but shall I bring my Gitterne thither indeed? Yes, in any case, replied Bruno, for Musicke is a matter of mighty prevailing. Ah Bruno (quoth Calandrino) thou wouldst not credit me in the morning, when I tolde thee, how the very sight of my person had wounded her: I perceived it at the very first looke of her owne, for shee had no power to conceale it. Who but my selfe could so soone have enflamed her affection, and being a woman of such worth and beauty as shee is? There are infinite proper handsome fellowes, that daily haunt the company of dainty Damosels, yet are so shallow in the affayres of love, as they are not able to win one wench of a thousand, no, not with all the wit they have, such is their extreame follie and ill fortune.

Then pausing a while, and sodainely rapping out a Lovers Oath or two, thus he proceeded. My dearest Bruno, thou shalt see how I can tickle my Gitterne, and what good sport will ensue thereon. If thou dost observe me with judgement, why man, I am not so old as I seeme to be, and she could perceive it at the very first view; yea, and she shall finde it so too, when we have leysure to consult upon further occasions: I finde my selfe in such a free and frolicke jocunditie of spirit, that I will make her to follow me, even as a fond woman doth after her child.

But beware, saide Bruno, that thou do not gripe her over-hard, and in kissing, bee carefull of biting, because the teeth stand in thy head like the pegges of a Lute, yet make a comely shew in thy faire wide mouth, thy cheekes looking like two of our artificiall Roses, swelling amiably, when thy jawes are well fild with meat. Calandrino hearing these hansome commendations, thought himselfe a man of action already, going, singing, and frisking before his companie so lively, as if he had not bin in his skin.

On the morrow, carrying his Gitterne thither with him, to the no little delight of his companions, hee both played and sung a whole Bed-role of Songs, not addicting himselfe to any worke all the day: but loitering fantastically, one while he gazed out at the window, then ran to the gate, and oftentimes downe into the Court, onely to have a sight of his Mistresse. She also (as cunningly) encountred all his follies, by such directions as Bruno gave her, and many more beside of her owne devising, to quicken him still with new occasions: Bruno plaid the Ambassador betweene them, in delivering the messages from Calandrino, and then returning her answers to him. Sometimes when she was absent thence (which often hapned as occasions called her) then he would write letters in her name, and bring them, as if they were sent by her, to give him hope of what hee desired, but because she was then among her kindred, yet she could not be unmindfull of him.

In this manner, Bruno and Buffalmaco (who had the managing of this amorous businesse) made a meere Gregory of poore Calandrino, causing him somtimes to send her, one while a pretty peece of Ivory, then a faire wrought purse, and a costly paire of knives, with other such like friendly tokens: bringing him backe againe, as in requital of them, counterfetted Rings of no valew, Bugles and bables, which he esteemed as matters of great moment. Moreover, at divers close and sodain meetings, they made him pay for many dinners and suppers, amounting to indifferent charges, onely to be careful in the furtherance of his love-suit, and to conceale it from his wife.

Having worne out three or foure months space in this fond and frivolous manner, without any other successe then as hath bene declared; and Calandrino perceiving, that the worke undertaken by him and his fellowes, grew very neere uppon the finishing, which would barre him of any longer resorting thither: hee began to solicite Bruno more importunately, then all the while before he hadde done. In regard whereof Nicholetta being one day come thither, and Bruno having conferred both with her and Phillippo, with ful determination what was to be done, he began with Calandrino, saying. My honest Neighbour and Friend, this Woman hath made a thousand promises, to graunt what thou art so desirous to have, and I plainly perceive that she hath no such meaning, but meerely plaies with both our noses. In which respect, seeing she is so perfidious, and will not perfourme one of all her faithfull-made promises: if thou wilt consent to have it so, she shall be compelled to do it whether she will or no. Yea marry Bruno, answered Calandrino, that were an excellent course indeede, if it could be done, and with expedition.

Bruno stood musing awhile to himselfe, as if he had some strange stratagem in his braine, and afterward said. Hast thou so much corage Calandrino, as but to handle a peece of written parchment, which I will give thee? Yes, that I have answered Calandrino, I hope that needed not to be doubted. Well then, saide Bruno, procure that I may have a piece of Virgin Parchment brought mee, with a living Bat or Reremouse; three graines of Incense, and an hallowed Candle, then leave me to effect what shal content thee. Calandrino watched all the next night following, with such preparation as he could make, onely to catch a Bat; which being taken at the last, he broght it alive to Bruno (with all the other materials appointed) who taking him alone into a backer Chamber, there hee wrote divers follies on the Parchment, in the shape of strange and unusuall Charracters, which he delivered to

Calandrino, saying: Be bold Calandrino, and build constantly uppon my wordes, that if thou canst but touch her with this sacred Charractred charme, she will immediately follow thee, and fulfil whatsoever thou pleasest to command hir. Wherefore, if Phillippo do this day walke any whither abroad from this house, presume to salute her, in any manner whatsoever it be, and touching her with the written lines, go presently to the barn of hay, which thou perceivest so neere adjoyning, the onely convenient place that can be, because few or none resort thither. She shall (in despight of her blood) follow thee; and when thou hast her there, I leave thee then to thy valiant victory. Calandrino stood on tiptoe, like a man newly molded by Fortune, and warranted Bruno to fulfil all effectually.

Nello, whom Calandrino most of all feared and mistrusted, had a hand as deepe as any of the rest in this deceite, and was as forward also to have it performed, by Brunoes direction, hee went unto Florence, where being in company with Calandrinoes Wife, thus hee began.

Cousine, thine unkinde usage by thine husband, is not unknown to me, how he did beate thee (beyond the compasse of all reason) when he brought home stones from the plain of Mugnone; in which regard, I am very desirous to have thee revenged on him: which if thou wilt not do, never repute me heereafter for thy Kinsman and Friend. He is falne in love with a Woman of the common gender, one that is to be hired for money: he hath his private meetings with her, and the place is partly knowne to me, as by a secret appointment (made very lately) I am credibly given to understand; wherefore walke presently along with me, and thou shalt take him in the heat of his knavery.

All the while as these words were uttering to her, shee could not dissemble her inward impatience, but starting up as halfe franticke with fury, she said. O notorious villaine! Darest thou abuse thine honest wife so basely? I sweare by blessed Saint Bridget, thou shalt be paid with coyne of thine owne stampe. So casting a light wearing Cloake about her, and taking a yong woman in her company; shee went away with Nello in no meane haste. Bruno seeing her comming a farre off, said to Phillippo: You Sir, you know what is to be done, act your part according to your appointment. Phillippo went immediately into the roome, where Calandrino and his other Consorts were at worke, and said to them. Honest friends, I have certaine occasions which command mine instant being at Florence: worke hard while I am absent, and I will not be unthankefull for it. Away hee departed from them, and hid himselfe in a convenient place, where he could not be descryed, yet see whatsoever Calandrino did: who when he imagined Phillippo to be farre enough off, descended downe into the Court, where he found Nicholetta sitting alone, and going towards her, began to enter into discoursing with her.

She knowing what remained to bee done on her behalfe, drew somewhat neere him, and shewed her selfe more familiar then formerly she had done: by which favourable meanes, he touched her with the charmed Parchment, which was no sooner done; but with out using any other kinde of language, hee went to the hay-Barne, whither Nicholletta followed him, and both being entred, he closed the Barne doore, and then stood gazing on her, as if hee had never seene her before. Standing stil as in a study, or bethinking himselfe what he should say: she began to use affable gesture to him, and taking him by the hand, made shew as if shee meant to kisse him, which yet she refrained, though he (rather then his life) would gladly have had it. Why how now deare Calandrino (quoth she) jewell of my joy, comfort of my heart, how many times have I longed for thy sweet Company? And enjoying it now, according to mine owne desire, dost thou stand like a Statue, or man *alla morte?* The rare tunes of the Gitterne, but (much more) the melodious accents of thy voyce, excelling Orpheus or Amphion, so ravished my soule, as I know not how to expresse the depth of mine affection; and yet hast thou brought me hither, onely to looke babies in mine eyes, and not so much as speake one kinde word to me?

Bruno and Buffalmaco, having hid themselves close behinde Philippo, they both heard and saw all this amourous conflict, and as Calandrino was quickning his courage, and wiping his mouth, with intent to kisse her: his wife and Nello entred into the Barne, which caused Nicholetta to get her gone presently, sheltring her self where Philippo lay scouting. But the enraged woman ranne furiously upon poore daunted Calandrino, making such a pitiful massacre with her nailes, and tearing the haire from his head, as hee meerely looked like an infected Anatomy. Fowle loathsome dog (quoth she) must you be at your minions, and leave mee hunger-starved at home? An olde knave with (almost) never a good tooth in thy head, and yet art thou neighing after young wenches? hast thou not worke enough at home, but must bee gadding in to other mens grounds? Are these the fruites of wandring abroad?

Calandrino being in this pittifull perplexity, stood like one neither alive nor dead, nor daring to use any resistance against her; but fell on his knees before his Wife, holding up his hands for mercy, and entreating her (for charities sake) not to torment him any more: for he had committed no harme at all, and the Gentlewoman was his Masters Wife, who came with no such intent thither, as shee fondly imagined. Wife, or wife not (quoth she) I would have none to meddle with my Husband, but I that have the most right to him.

Bruno and Buffalmaco, who had laughed all this while heartily at this pastime, with Phillippo and Nicholetta; came running in haste to know the reason of this loude noise, and after they had pacified the woman with gentle perswasions: they advised Calandrino, to walke with his Wife to Florence, and returne no more to worke there againe, least Phillippo hearing what had hapned, should be revenged on him with some outrage. Thus poore Calandrino miserably misused and beaten, went home to Florence with his Wife, scoulded and raild at all the way, beside his other molestations (day and night) afterward: his Companions, Phillippo and Nicholetta, making themselves merry at his mis-fortune.

THE SIXT NOVELL

WHEREIN IS MANIFESTED, THAT AN OFFENCE COMMITTED IGNORANTLY, AND BY MISTAKING; OUGHT TO BE COVERED WITH GOOD ADVISE, AND CIVILL DISCRETION.

Two *yong Gentlemen, the one named Panuccio, and the other Adriano, lodged one night in a poore Inne, where one of them went to bed to the Hostes Daughter, and the other (by mistaking his way in the darke) to the Hostes Wife. He which lay with the daughter, happened afterward to the Hostes bed, and told him what he had done, as thinking he spake to his own companyon. Discontentment growing betweene them, the Mother perceiving her errour, went to bed to her daughter, and with discreete language, made a generall pacification.*

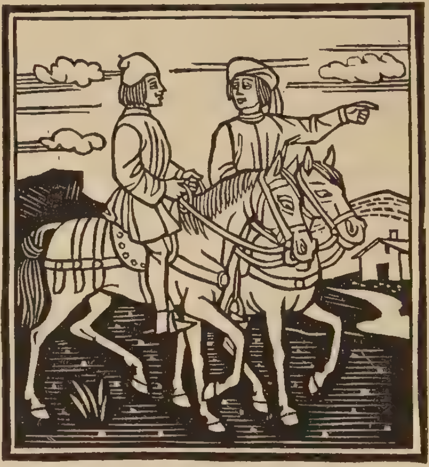
CALANDRINO, whose mishaps had so many times made the whole assembly merry, and this last passing among them with indifferent commendations: upon a generall silence commanded, the Queene gave order to Pamphilus, that hee should follow next, as indeed he did, beginning thus. Praiseworthy Ladies, the name of Nicoletta, so fondly affected by Calandrino, putteth mee in minde of a Novell, concerning another Nicoletta, of whom I purpose to speake: to the ende you may observe how by a sudden wary fore-sight, a discreet woman compassed the meanes to avoyde a notorious scandall.

On the plaine of Mugnone, neere to Florence, dwelt (not long since) an honest meane man, who kept a poore Inne or Ostery for travellers, where they might have some slender entertainement for their money. As he was but a poore man, so his house affoorded but very small receit of guests, not lodging any but on necessity, and such as he had some knowledge of. This honest poore hoste had a woman (sufficiently faire) to his wife, by whom hee had also two children, the one a comely young maiden, aged about fifteene yeares, and the other a sonne, not fully (as yet) a yeare old, and sucking on the mothers brest.

A comely youthfull Gentleman of our City, became amorously affected to the Damosell, resorting thither divers times as hee travelled on the way, to expresse how much he did respect her. And she accounting her fortune none of the meanest, to bee beloved by so youthfull a Gallant, declared such vertuous and modest demeanour, as might deserve his best opinion of her: so that their love grew to an equall simpathy, and mutuall contentment of them both, in expectation of further effects; he being named Panuccio, and she Nicholletta.

The heate of affection thus encreasing day by day, Panuccio grew exceedingly desirous to enjoy the fruits of his long continued liking, and divers devises mustred in his braine, how he might compasse one nights lodging in her fathers house, whereof hee knew every part and parcell, as not doubting to effect what hee desired, yet undiscovered by any, but the maide her selfe.

According as his intention aymed, so he longed to put it in execution, and having imparted his mind to an honest loyall friend, named Adriano, who was acquainted with the course of his love: hyring two horses, and having Portmantues behind them, filled with matters of no moment, they departed from Florence, as if they had some great journey to ride. Having spent the day time where themselves best pleased, darke night being entred, they arrived on the plaine of Mugnone, where, as if they were come from the parts of Romanio, they rode directly to this poore Inne, and knocking at the doore, the honest Hoste (being familiar and friendly to all commers) opened the doore, when Panuccio spake in this manner to him. Good man, we must request one nights lodging with you, for we thought to have reached so farre as Florence, but dark night preventing us, you see at what a late houre wee are come hither. Signior Panuccio, answered the hoste, it is not unknowne to you, how unfiting my poore house is, for entertaining such guests as you are: Neverthelesse, seeing you are overtaken by so unseasonable an houre, and no other place is neere for your receite; I will gladly lodge you so well as I can.



When they were dismounted from their

horses, and entred into the simple Inne: having taken order for feeding their horses, they accepted such provision, as the place and time afforded, requesting the Hoste to suppe with them. Now I am to tell you, that there was but one small Chamber in the house, wherin stood three beds, as best the Hoste had devised to place them, two of them standing by the walles side, and the third fronting them both, but with such close and narrow passage, as very hardly could one step betweene them. The best of these three beds was appointed for the Gentlemen, and therein they layd them down to rest, but sleepe they could not, albeit they dissembled it very formally. In the second Bed was Nicholetta the daughter, lodged by her selfe, and the father and mother in the third, and because she was to give the child sucke in the night time, the Cradle (wherein it lay) stood close by their beds side, because the childes crying or any other occasion concerning it, should not disquiet the Gentlemen.

Panuccio having subtily observed all this, and in what manner they went to bed; after such a space of time, as he imagined them to be all fast asleepe, he arose very softly, and stealing to the bed of Nicholetta, lay downe gently by her. And albeit she seemed somewhat afraid at the first, yet when she perceived who it was, shee rather bad him welcome, then shewed her selfe any way discontented. Now while Panuccio continued thus with the maide, it fortuned that a Cat threw down somewhat in the house, the noise wherof awaked the wife, and fearing greater harme, then (indeed) had hapned, she arose without a Candle, and went groping in the darke, towards the place where shee heard the noyse. Adriano, who had no other meaning but well, found occasion also to rise, about some naturall necessity, and making his passage in the darke, stumbled on the childes Cradle (in the way) where the woman had set it, and being unable to passe by, without removing it from the place: tooke and set it by his owne beds side, and having done the businesse for which he rose, returned to his bed againe, never remembring to set the Cradle where first he found it.

The Wife having found the thing throwne downe being of no value or moment, cared not for lighting any candle; but rating the Cat, returned backe, feeling for the bed where her Husband lay, but finding not the Cradle there, she said to her selfe. What a foolish woman am I, that cannot well tell my selfe what I doe? Instead of my Husbands bed, I am going to both my guests.

So, stepping on a little further, she found the childes Cradle, and laid her selfe downe by Adriano, thinking shee had gone right to her Husband. Adriano being not yet falne asleepe, feeling the hostesse in bed with him: tooke advantage of so faire an occasion offered, and what he did, is no businesse of mine, (as I heard) neither found the woman any fault. Matters comming to passe in this strange manner, and Panuccio fearing, lest sleepe seazing on him, he might disgrace the maides reputation: taking his kinde farewell of her, with many kisses and sweet imbraces: returned againe to his owne Bed, but meeting with the Cradle in his way, and thinking it stood by the hostes Bed, (as truely it did so at the first) went backe from the Cradle, and stept into the hostes Bed indeed, who awaked upon his very entrance, albeit he slept very soundly before.

Panuccio supposing that he was laid downe by his loving friend Adriano, merrily said to the Hoste. I protest to thee, as I am a Gentleman, Nicholetta is a dainty delicate wench, and worthy to be a very good mans wife: this night shee hath given mee the sweetest entertainement, as the best Prince in the world can wish no better, and I have kist her most kindly for it. The Hoste hearing these newes, which seemed very unwelcome to him, said first to himself: What make such a devill heere in my Bedde? Afterward being more rashly angry, then well advised, hee said to Panuccio. Canst thou make vaunt of such a mounstrous villany? Or thinkest thou, that heaven hath not due vengeance in store, to requite all wicked deeds of darkenesse? If all should sleepe, yet I have courage sufficient to right my wrong, and yet as olde as I am thou shalt be sure to finde it.

Our amorous Panuccio being none of the wisest young men in the world, perceiving his errour; sought not to amend it, (as well he might have done) with some queint straine of wit, carried in quicke and cleanly manner, but angerly answered. What shall I find that thou darst doe to me? am I any way afraid of thy threatnings? The Hostes imagining she was in bed with her Husband, said to Adriano: Harke Husband, I thinke our Guests are quarrelling together, I hope they will doe no harme to one another. Adriano laughing outright, answered. Let them alone, and become friends againe as they fell out: perhaps they dranke too much yesternight.

The woman perceiving that it was her husband that quarrelled, and distinguishing the voyce of Adriano from his: knew presently where shee was, and with whom; wherefore having wit at will, and desirous to cloude an error unadvisedly committed, and with no willing consent of her selfe: without returning any more words, presently she rose, and taking the Cradle with the child in it, removed it thence to her daughters bed side, although shee had no light to helpe her, and afterward went to bed to her, where (as if she were but newly awaked) she called her Husband, to understand what angry speeches had past betweene him and Panuccio. The Hoste replyed, saying. Didst thou not heare him wife, brag and boast, how he hath lyen this night with our daughter Nicholetta? Husband (quoth she) he is no honest Gentleman; if hee should say so, and beleeve me it is a manifest lye, for I am in bed with her my selfe, and never yet closed mine eyes together, since the first houre I laid me downe: it is unmannerly done of him to speake it, and you are little lesse then a logger-head, if you doe beleeve it. This proceedeth from your bibbing and swilling yesternight, which (as it seemeth) maketh you to walke about the roome in your sleepe, dreaming of wonders in the night season: it were no great sinne if you brake your neck, to teach you keepe a fairer quarter; and how commeth it to passe, that Signior Panuccio could not keepe himselfe in his owne bed?

Adriano (on the other side) perceiving how wisely the woman excused her owne shame and her daughters; to backe her in a businesse so cunningly begun, he called to Panuccio, saying. Have not I tolde thee an hundred times, that thou art not fit to lye any where, out of thine owne lodging? What a shame is this base imperfection to thee, by rising and walking thus in the night-time, according as thy dreames doe wantonly delude thee, and cause thee to forsake thy bed, telling nothing but lies and fables, yet avouching them for manifest truthes? Assuredly this will procure no meane perill unto thee: Come hither, and keepe in thine owne bedde for meere shame.

When the honest meaning Host heard, what his own Wife and Adriano had confirmed: he was verily perswaded, that Panuccio spake in a dreame all this while: And to make it the more constantly apparant, Panuccio (being now growne wiser by others example) lay talking and blundring to himselfe, even as if dreames or perturbations of the minde did much molest him, with strange distractions in franticke manner. Which the Hoste perceiving, and compassionating his case, as one man should do anothers: he tooke him by the shoulders, jogging and hunching him, saying. Awake Signior Panuccio, and get you gone hence to your owne bed.

Panuccio, yawning and stretching out his limbes, with unusuall groanes and respirations, such as (better) could bee hardly dissembled: seemed to wake as out of a traunce, and calling his friend Adriano, said.

Adriano, is it day, that thou dost waken me? It may be day or night replyed Adriano, for both (in these fits) are alike to thee. Arise man for shame, and come to thine lodging. Then faining to be much troubled and sleepie, he arose from the hoast, and went to Adrianoes bed.

When it was day, and all in the house risen, the hoast began to smile at Panuccio, mocking him with his idle dreaming and talking in the night.

So, falling from one merry matter to another, yet without any mislike at all: the Gentlemen, having their horses prepared, and their Portmantues fastened behind, drinking to their hoast, mounted on horsebacke, and they roade away towards Florence, no lesse contented with the manner of occasions happened, then the effects they sorted to. Afterward, other courses were taken, for the continuance of this begun pleasure with Nicholetta, who made her mother beleeve, that Panuccio did nothing else but dreame. And the mother her selfe remembring how kindely Adriano had used her (a fortune not expected by her before:) was more then halfe of the minde, that she did then dreame also, while she was waking.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

WHEREBY (WITH SOME INDIFFERENT REASON) IT IS CONCLUDED, THAT DREAMES DO NOT ALWAYES FALL OUT TO BE LEASINGS.

TALANO *de Molese dreamed, That a Wolfe rent and tore his wives face and throate. Which dreame he told to her, with advise to keepe her selfe out of danger; which she refusing to doe, received what followed.*

BY the conclusion of Pamphilus his Novel, wherein the womans ready wit, at a time of such necessity, carried deserved commendations: the Queen gave command to Madam Pampinea, that she should next begin with hers, and so she did, in this manner. In some discourses (gracious Ladies) already past among us, the truth of apparitions in dreames hath partly bin approved, whereof very many have made a mockery. Neverthelesse, whatsoever hath heeretofore bin sayde, I purpose to acquaint you with a very short Novell, of a strange accident happening unto a neighbour of mine, in not crediting a Dreame which her Husband told her.

I cannot tell, whether you knew Talano de Molese, or no, a man of much honour, who tooke to wife a yong Gentlewoman, named Margarita, as beautifull as the best: but yet so peevish, scornefull, and fantasticall, that she disdained any good advice given her; neyther could any thing be done, to cause her contentment; which absurd humors were highly displeasing to her husband: but in regard he knew not how to helpe it, constrainedly he did endure it. It came to passe, that Talano being with his wife, at a summer-house of his owne in the country, he dreamed one night, that he saw his Wife walking in a faire wood, which adjoyned neere unto his house, and while she thus continued there, he seemed to see issue foorth from a corner of the said Wood, a great and furious Wolfe, which leaping sodainly on her, caught her by the face and throate, drawing her downe to the earth, and offering to drag her thence. But he crying out for helpe, recovered her from the Wolfe, yet having her face and throat very pitifully rent and torne.

In regard of this terrifying dreame, when Talano was risen in the morning, and sate conversing with his wife, he spake thus unto hir. Woman, although thy froward wilfull Nature be such, as hath not permitted me one pleasing day with thee, since first we becam man and wife, but rather my life hath bene most tedious to me, as fearing still some mischeefe should happen to thee: yet let mee now in loving manner advise thee, to follow my counsell, and (this day) not to walke abroad out of this house. She demanded a reason for this advice of his. He related to her every particular of his dreame, adding with all these speeches.

True it is Wife (quoth he) that little credit should bee given to dreames: neverthelesse, when they deliver advertisement of harmes to ensue, there is nothing lost by shunning and avoiding them. She fleering in his face, and shaking her head at him, replyed. Such harmes as thou wishest, such thou dreamest of. Thou pretendest much pittie and care of me, but all to no other end: but what mischeefes thou dreamest happening unto mee, so wouldest thou see them effected on me. Wherefore, I will well enough looke to my selfe, both this day, and at all times else: because thou shalt never make thy selfe merry, with any such misfortune as thou wishest unto me.

Well Wife, answered Talano, I knew well enough before, what thou wouldst say: An unsound head is soone scratcht with the very gentlest Combe: but beleeve as thou pleasest. As for my selfe, I speake with a true and honest meaning soule, and once againe I do advise thee, to keepe within our doores all this day: at least wise beware, that thou walke not into our wood, bee it but in regard of my dreame. Well sir (quoth she scoffingly) once you shall say, I followed your counsell: but within her selfe she fell to this murmuring. Now I perceive my husbands cunning colouring, and why I must not walke this day into our wood: he hath made a compact with some common Queane, closely to have her company there, and is afraide least I should take them tardy. Belike he would have me feed among blinde folke, and I were worthy to bee thought a starke foole, if I should not prevent a manifest trechery, being intended against me. Go thither therefore I will, and tarry there all the whole day long; but I will meet with him in his merchandize, and see the Pink wherin he adventures.

After this her secret consultation, her husband was no sooner gone forth at one doore, but shee did the like at another, yet so secretly as possibly she could devise to doe, and (without any delaying) she went to the Wood, wherein she hid her selfe very closely, among the thickest of the bushes, yet could discerne every way about her, if any body should offer to passe by her. While shee kept her selfe in this concealment, suspecting other mysterious matters, as her idle imagination had tutord her, rather then the danger of any Wolfe: out of a brakie thicket by her, sodainly rushed a huge and dreadfull Wolfe, as having found her by the sent, mounting uppe, and grasping her throat in his mouth, before she saw him, or could call to heaven for mercy.

Being thus seised of her, he carried her as lightly away, as if shee had bin no heavier then a Lambe, she being (by no meanes) able to cry, because he held her so fast by the throate, and hindred any helping of her selfe. As the Wolfe carried her thus from thence, he had quite strangled her, if certaine Shepheards had not met him, who with their outcries and exclaimes at the Wolfe, caused him to let her fall, and hast away to save his owne life. Notwithstanding the harme done to her throat and face, the shepheards knew her, and caried her home to her house, where she remained a long while after, carefully attended by Physitians and Chirurgians.

Now, although they were very expert and cunning men all, yet could they not so perfectly cure her, but both her throate, and part of her face were so blemished, that whereas she seemed a rare creature before, she was now deformed and much unsightly. In regard of which strange alteration, being ashamed to shew her selfe in any place, where formerly she had bene seene: she spent her time in sorrow and mourning, repenting her insolent and scornfull carriage, as also her rash running forth into danger, upon a foolish and jealous surmise, beleeving her husbands dreames the better for ever after.

THE EIGHT NOVELL

WHEREBY PLAINLY APPEARETH, THAT THEY WHICH TAKE DELIGHT IN DECEIVING OTHERS, DO WELL DESERVE TO BE DECEIVED THEMSELVES.

BLONDELLO *(in a merry maner) caused Guiotto to beguile himselfe of a good dinner: for which deceit, Guiotto became cunningly revenged, by procuring Blondello to be unreasonably beaten and misused.*

It was a generall opinion in the whole Joviall Companie, that whatsoever Talano saw in his sleepe, was not anie dreame, but rather a vision: considring, every part thereof fell out so directly, without the lest failing. But when silence was enjoyned, then the Queene gave forth by evident demonstration, that Madam Lauretta was next to succeed, whereupon she thus began. As all they (judicious hearers) which have this day spoken before me, derived the ground or project of their Novels, from some other argument spoken of before: even so, the cruell revendge of the Scholler, yesterday discoursed at large by Madame Pampinea, maketh me to remember another Tale of like nature, some-what greevous to the sufferer, yet not in such cruell measure inflicted, as that on Madam Helena.

There dwelt sometime in Florence, one who was generally called by the name of Guiotto, a man being the greatest Gourmand, and grossest feeder, as ever was seene in any Countrey, all his meanes and procurements meerly unable to maintaine expences for filling his belly. But otherwise he was of sufficient and commendable carriage, fairely demeaned, and well discoursing on any argument: yet, not as a curious and spruce Courtier, but rather a frequenter of rich mens Tables, where choice of good cheere is sildome wanting, and such should have his company, albeit not invited, yet (like a bold intruder) he had the courage to bid himselfe welcome.

At the same time, and in our City of Florence also, there was another man, named Blondello, very low of stature, yet comly formed, quicke witted, more neat and brisk then a Butterflye, alwaies wearing a wrought silke cap on his head, and not a haire staring out of order, but the tuft flourishing above the forehead, and he such another trencher-fly for the table, as our forenamed Guiotto was. It so fel out on a morning in the Lent time, that hee went into the Fish-market, where he bought two goodly Lampreyes, for Messer Viero de Cherchi, and was espied by Guiotto, who (comming to Blondello) said. What is the meaning of this cost, and for whom is it? Whereto Blondello thus answered. Yesternight, three other Lampries, far fairer and fatter then these, and a whole Sturgeon, were sent unto Messer Corso Donati, and being not sufficient to feede divers Gentlemen, whom hee hath invited this day to dine with him, hee caused me to buy these two beside: Doest not thou intend to make one among them? Yes I warrant thee, replied Guiotto, thou knowst I can invite my selfe thither, without any other bidding.

So parting; about the houre of dinner time, Guiotto went to the house of the saide Messer Corso, whom he found sitting and talking with certain of his neighbors, but dinner was not (as yet) ready, neither were they come thither to dinner. Messer Corso demaunded of Guiotto, what newes with him, and whither he went? Why Sir (said Guiotto) I come to dine with you, and your good company. Wherto Messer Corso answered, That he was welcom, and his other friends being gone, dinner was served in, none els therat present but Messer Corso and Guiotto: al the diet being a poore dish of Pease, a litle piece of Tunny, and a few smal fishes fried, without any other dishes to follow after. Guiotto seeing no better fare, but being disapointed of his expectation, as longing to feed on the Lampries and Sturgeon, and so to have made a ful dinner indeed: was of a quick apprehension, and apparantly perceived, that Blondello had meerly guld him in a knavery, which did not a litle vex him, and made him vow to be revenged on Blondello, as he could compasse occasion afterward.

Before many daies were past, it was his fortune to meete with Blondello, who having told this jest to divers of his friends, and much good merriment made thereat: he saluted Guiotto in ceremonious manner, saying. How didst thou like the fat Lampreyes and Sturgeon, which thou fedst on at the house of Messer Corso Donati? Wel Sir (answered Guiotto) perhaps before eight dayes passe over my head, thou shalt meet with as pleasing a dinner as I did. So, parting away from Blondello, he met with a Porter or burthen-bearer, such as are usually sent on errands; and hyring him to deliver a message for him, gave him a glasse bottle, and bringing him neere to the Hal-house of Cavicciuli, shewed him there a knight, called Signior Phillipo Argenti, a man of huge stature, stout, strong, vainglorious, fierce and sooner mooved to anger then any other man. To him (quoth Guiotto) thou must go with this bottle in thy hand, and say thus to him. Sir, Blondello sent me to you, and courteously entreateth you, that you would enrubinate this glasse bottle with your best Claret Wine; because he would make merry with a few friends of his. But beware he lay no hand on thee, because he may bee easily induced to misuse thee, and so my businesse be disappointed. Well Sir replied the Porter, shal I say any thing else unto him? No (quoth Guiotto) only go and deliver this message, and when thou art returned, Ile pay thee for thy paines.

The Porter being gone to the house, delivered his message to the knight, who being a man of no great civill breeding, but furious, rash, and inconsiderate: presently conceived, that Blondello (whom he knew well enough) sent this message in meere mockage of him, and starting up with fiery lookes, said: What enrubination of Claret should I send him? and what have I to do with him, or his drunken friends? Let him and thee go hang your selves together. So he stept to catch hold on the Porter, but he (being well warnd before) was quicke and nimble, and escaping from him, returned backe to Guiotto (who observed all) and told him the answer of Signior Phillippo. Guiotto not a little contented, paied the Porter, and taried not in any place til he met with Blondello, to whom he said. When wast thou at the Hall of Cavicciuli? Not a long while, answerd Blondello, but why dost thou demand such a question? Because (quoth Guiotto) Signior Phillippo hath sought about for thee, yet knowe not I what he would have with thee. Is it so? replied Blondello, then I wil walke thither presently, to understand his pleasure.

When Blondello was thus parted from him, Guiotto folowed not farre off behind him, to behold the issue of this angry businesse; and Signior Phillippo, because he could not catch the Porter, continued much distempred, fretting and fuming, in regard he could not comprehend the meaning of the Porters message: but onely surmized, that Blondello (by the procurement of some body else) had done this in scorne of him. While he remained thus deeply discontented, he espied Blondello comming towards him, and meeting him by the way, he stept close to him, and gave him a cruell blow on the face, causing his nose to fall out a bleeding. Alas Sir, said Blondello, wherefore do you strike me? Signior Phillippo, catching him by the haire of the head, trampled his wrought night-cap in the dirt, and his cloke also; when, laying many violent blowes on him, he said. Villanous Traitor as thou art, Ile teach thee what it is to enrubinate with Claret, either thy selfe, or any of thy cupping companions: Am I a child, to be jested withall?

Nor was he more furious in words, then in strokes also, beating him about the face, hardly leaving any haire on his head, and dragging him along in the mire, spoyling all his garments, and he not able (from the first blow given) to speake a word in defence of himselfe. In the end, Signior Phillippo having extreamly beaten him, and many people gathering about them, to succour a man so much misused, the matter was at large related, and manner of the message sending. For which, they all present, did greatly reprehend Blondello, considering he knew what kinde of man Phillippo was, not any way to be jested withall. Blondello in teares constantly maintained, that he never sent any such message for wine, or intended it in the least degree: so, when the tempest was more mildly calmed, and Blondello (thus cruelly beaten and durtied) had gotten home to his owne house, he could then remember, that (questionles) this was occasioned by Guiotto.

After some few dayes were passed over, and the hurts in his face indifferently cured; Blondello beginning to walke abroade againe, chanced to meet with Guiotto: who laughing heartily at him, sayde. Tell me Blondello, how doost thou like the enrubinating Clarret of Signior Phillippo? As well (quoth Blondello) as thou didst the Sturgeon and Lampreyes at Messer Corso Donaties. Why then (sayde Guiotto) let these two tokens continue familiar betweene thee and me, when thou wouldst bestow such another dinner on mee, then wil I enrubinate thy nose with a bottle of the same Claret. But Blondello perceived (to his cost) that hee had met with the worser bargaine, and Guiotto got cheare, without any blowes: and therefore desired a peacefull attonement, each of them (alwayes after) abstaining from flouting one another.

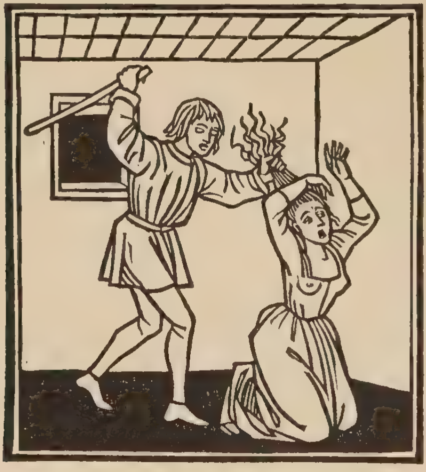
THE NINTH NOVELL

CONTAINING AN EXCELLENT ADMONITION, THAT SUCH AS COVET TO HAVE THE LOVE OF OTHER MEN, MUST FIRST LEARNE THEMSELVES, HOW TO LOVE: ALSO, BY WHAT MEANES SUCH WOMEN AS ARE CURST AND SELF-WILLED, MAY BE REDUCED TO CIVILL OBEDIENCE.

Two *yong Gentlemen, the one named Melisso, borne in the City of Laiazzo: and the other Giosefo of Antioche, travailed together unto Salomon, the famous King of Great Britaine. The one desiring to learne what he should do, whereby to compasse and winne the love of men. The other craved to be enstructed, by what meanes hee might reclaime an headstrong and unruly wife. And what answeres the wise King gave unto them both, before they departed away from him.*

UPON the conclusion of Madame Laurettaes Novell, none now remained to succeede next in order, but onely the Queene her selfe, the priviledge reserved, granted to Dioneus; wherefore, after they had all smiled at the folly of Blondello, with a chearfull countenance thus the Queene began.

Honourable Ladies, if with advised judgement, we do duly consider the order of all things, we shall very easily perceyve, That the whole universall multiplicitie of Women, by Nature, custome, and lawes, are and ought to be subject to men, yea, and to be governd by their discretion. Because every one desiring to enjoy peace, repose and comfort with them, under whose charge they are; ought to be humble, patient and obedient, over and beside her spotlesse honesty, which is the crowne and honour of every good woman. And although those lawes, which respect the common good of all things, or rather use and custome (as our wonted saying is) the powers wherof are very great, and worthy to be reverenced, should not make us wise in this case. Yet Nature hath given us a sufficient demonstration, in creating our bodies more soft and delicate, yea, and our hearts timorous, fearefull, benigne and compassionable, our strength feeble, our voyces pleasing, and the motion of our members sweetly plyant: all which are apparant testimonies, that wee have neede of others government.



Now, it is not to be denyed, that whosoever hath need of helpe, and is to bee governed: meerely reason commandeth, that they should bee subject and obedient to their governour. Who then should we have for our helps and governours, if not men? Wherfore, we should be intirely subject to them, in giving them due honour and reverence, and such a one as shall depart from this rule: she (in mine opinion) is not onely worthy of grievous reprehension, but also severe chastisement beside. And to this exact consideration (over and above divers other important reasons) I am the rather induced, by the Novel which Madame Pampinea so lately reported, concerning the froward and wilfull wife of Talano, who had a heavier punishment inflicted on her, then her Husband could devise to doe. And therefore it is my peremptory sentence, that all such women as will not be gracious, benigne and pleasing: doe justly deserve (as I have already said) rude, rough and harsh handling, as both nature, custome and lawes have commanded.

To make good what I have said, I wil declare unto you the counsell and advise, given by Salomon, the wise and famous King of Great Britaine, as a most wholesome and soveraigne medicine for the cure of such a dangerous disease, in any woman so fouly infected. Which counsel (notwithstanding) all such women as have no need of this Phisicke, I would not have them to imagine, that it was meant for them, albeit men have a common Proverbe, to wit.

As the good horse and bad horse, doe both need
the spurre.
So a good wife and bad wife, a wand will make
stirre.

Which saying, whosoever doth interpret it in such pleasing manner as they ought, shal find it (as you al wil affirm no lesse) to be very true: especially in the morall meaning, it is beyond all contradiction. Women are naturally all unstable, and easily enclining to misgovernment; wherefore to correct the iniquity of such a distemperature in them that out-step the tearmes and bounds of womanhood, a wand hath been allowed for especiall phisicke. As in the like manner, for support of vertue, in those of contrary condition, shaming to be sullyed with so grosse a sinne: the correcting Wand may serve as a walking staffe, to protect them from all other feares. But, forbearing to teach any longer; let mee proceed to my purpose, and tell you my Novell.

In those ancient and reverend dayes, wherof I am now to speake, the high renowne and admirable wisedome of Salomon, King of Great Brittain, was most famous throughout all parts of the world; for answering all doubtfull questions and demaunds whatsoever, that possibly could be propounded to him. So that many resorted to him, from the most remote and furthest off countreyes, to heare his miraculous knowledge and experience, yea, and to crave his counsell, in matters of greatest importance. Among the rest of them which repaired thither, was a rich yong Gentleman, honourably descended, named Melisso, who came from the City of Laiazzo, where he was both borne, and dwelt.

In his riding towards France, as he passed by Naples, hee overtooke another yong Gentleman, a native of Antioch, and named Giosefo, whose journey lay the same way as the others did. Having ridden in company some few dayes together, as it is a custome commonly observed among Travellers, to understand one anothers Countrey and condition, as also to what part his occasions call him: so happened it with them, Giosefo directly telling him, that he journyed towards the wise King Salomon, to desire his advise what meanes he should observe, in the reclaiming of a wilfull wife, the most froward and selfe-willed woman that ever lived; whom neither faire perswasions, nor gentle courtesies could in any manner prevaile withall. Afterward he demaunded of Melisso, to know the occasion of his travell, and whither.

Now trust me Sir, answered Melisso, I am a native of Laiazzo, and as you are vexed with one great mis-fortune, even so am I offended with another. I am young, wealthy, well derived by birth, and allow liberall expences, for maintaining a worthy table in my house, without distinguishing persons by their rancke and quality, but make it free for all commers, both of the city, and all places els. Notwithstanding all which bounty and honourable entertainement, I cannot meet with any man that loveth me. In which respect, I journey to the same place as you doe, to crave the counsell of so wise a King, what I should doe, whereby I might procure men to love me. Thus like two well-met friendly companions, they rode on together, untill they arrived in Great Britaine, where, by meanes of the Noble Barons attending on the King, they were brought before him. Melisso delivered his minde in very few words, whereto the King made no other answere, but this: Learne to love. Which was no sooner spoken, but Melisso was dismissed from the Kings presence.

Giosefo also relating, wherefore he came thither; the King replying onely thus: Goe to the Goose Bridge: and presently Giosefo had also his dismission from the King. Comming forth, he found Melisso attending for him, and revealed in what manner the King had answered him: whereupon, they consulted together, concerning both their answeres, which seemed either to exceed their comprehension, or else was delivered them in meere mockery, and therefore (more then halfe discontented) they returned homeward againe.

After they had ridden on a few dayes together, they came to a River, over which was a goodly Bridge, and because a great company of Horses and Mules (heavily laden, and after the manner of a Caravan of Camels in Egypt) were first to passe over the saide Bridge; they gladly stayed to permit their passe. The greater number of them being already past over, there was one shie and skittish Mule (belike subject to fearefull starting, as oftentimes we see horses have the like ill quality) that would not passe over the Bridge by any meanes, wherefore one of the Muletters tooke a good Cudgell, and smote her at the first gently, as hoping so to procure her passage. Notwithstanding, starting one while backeward, then againe forward, side-wayes, and every way indeed, but the direct Roadway she would not goe.

Now grew the Muletter extreamely angry, giving her many cruell stroakes, on the head, sides, flancks and all parts else, but yet they proved to no purpose, which Melisso and Giosefo seeing, and being (by this meanes) hindred of their passage, they called to the Muletter, saying. Foolish fellow, what doest thou? Intendest thou to kill the Mule? why dost thou not leade her gently, which is the likelier course to prevaile by, then beating and misusing her as thou dost? Content your selves Gentlemen (answered the Muletter) you know your horses qualities, as I doe my Mules, let mee deale with her as I please. Having thus spoken, he gave her so many violent strokes, on head, sides, hippes, and every where else, as made her at last passe over the Bridge quietly, so that the Muletter wonne the Mastery of his Mule.

When Melisso and Giosefo had passed over the Bridge, where they intended to part each from other; a sudden motion happened into the minde of Melisso, which caused him to demaund of an aged man (who sate craving almes of Passengers at the Bridge foot) how the Bridge was called: Sir, answered the old man, this is called, The Goose Bridge. Which words when Giosefo heard, hee called to minde the saying of King Salomon, and therefore immediately saide to Melisso. Worthy friend, and partner in my travell, I dare now assure you, that the counsell given me by King Salomon, may fall out most effectall and true: For I plainely perceive, that I knew not how to handle my selfe-will'd wife, untill the Muletter did instruct me. So, requesting still to enjoy the others Company, they journeyed on, till at the length they came to Laiazzo, where Giosefo retained Melisso still with him, for some repose after so long a journey, and entertained him with very honourable respect and courtesie.

One day Giosefo said to his Wife: Woman, this Gentleman is my intimate friend, and hath borne me company in all my travell: such dyet therfore as thou wilt welcome him withall, I would have it ordered (in dressing) according to his direction. Melisso perceiving that Giosefo would needs have it to be so; in few words directed her such a course, as (for ever) might be to her Husbands contentment. But she, not altring a jote from her former disposition, but rather farre more froward and tempestuous: delighted to vexe and crosse him, doing every thing quite contrary to the order appointed. Which Giosefo observing, angerly he said unto her. Was it not tolde you by my friend, in what manner he would have our Supper drest? She turning fiercely to him, replyed. Am I to be directed by him or thee? Supper must and shall bee drest as I will have it: if it pleaseth mee, I care not who doth dislike it; if thou wouldst have it otherwise, goe seeke both your Suppers where you may have it.

Melisso marvelling at her froward answere, rebuked her for it in very kind manner: whereupon, Giosefo spake thus to her. I perceive wife, you are the same woman as you were wount to be: but beleeve me on my word, I shal quite alter you from this curst complexion. So turning to Melisso, thus he proceeded. Noble friend, we shall try anone, whether the counsell of King Salomon bee effectuall, or no; and I pray you, let it not be offensive to you to see it; but rather hold all to be done in merriment. And because I would not be hindered by you, doe but remember the answere which the Muletter gave us, when we tooke compassion on his Mule. Worthy friend, replyed Melisso, I am in your owne house, where I purpose not to impeach whatsoever you doe.

Giosefo, having provided a good Holly-wand, went into the Chamber, where his wife sate railing, and despitefully grumbling, where taking her by the haire of her head, he threw her at his feete, beating her extreamely with the wand. She crying, then cursing, next railing, lastly fighting, biting and scratching, when she felt the cruell smart of the blowes, and that all her resistance served to no end: then she fell on her knees before him, and desired mercy for charities sake. Giosefo fought still more and more on head, armes, shoulders, sides, and all parts else, pretending as if he heard not her complaints, but wearied himselfe wel neere out of breath: so that (to be briefe) she that never felt his fingers before, perceived and confessed, it was now too soone. This being done, hee returned to Melisso, and said: Tomorrow we shall see a miracle, and how availeable the counsell is of going to the Goose Bridge. So sitting a while together, after they had washed their hands, and supt, they withdrew to their lodgings.

The poore beaten woman, could hardly raise her selfe from the ground, which yet (with much adoe) she did, and threw her selfe upon the bed, where she tooke such rest as she could: but arising early the next morning, she came to her Husband, and making him a very low courtesie, demaunded what hee pleased to have for his dinner; he smiling heartely thereat, with Melisso, tolde her his mind. And when dinner time came, every thing was ready according to the direction given: in which regard, they highly commended the counsell, whereof they made such an harsh construction at the first.

Within a while after, Melisso being gone from Giosefo, and returned home to his owne house: hee acquainted a wise and reverend man, with the answere which king Salomon gave him, whereto hee received this reply. No better or truer advise could possibly be given you, for well you know, that you love not any man; but the bountiful banquets you bestow on them, is more in respect of your owne vaine-glory, then any kind affection you beare to them: Learne then to love men, as Salomon advised, and you shall be beloved of them againe. Thus our unruly Wife became mildely reclaimed, and the yong Gentleman, by loving others, found the fruits of reciporall affection.

THE TENTH NOVELL

IN JUST REPROOFE OF SUCH FOOLISH MEN, AS WILL BE GOVERNED BY OVER-LIGHT BELEEFE.

JOHN *de Barolo, at the instance and request of his Gossip Pietro da Tresanti, made an enchantment, to have his wife become a Mule. And when it came to the fastening on of the taile; Gossip Pietro by saying she should have no taile at all, spoyled the whole enchantment.*

THIS Novell reported by the Queene, caused a little murmuring among the Ladies, albeit the men laughed heartely thereat: but after they were all growne silent, Dioneus began in this manner. Gracious Beauties, among many white Doves, one blacke Crow will seeme more sightly, then the very whitest Swanne can doe. In like manner, among a multitude of wise men, sometimes one of much lesse wisedome and discretion, shall not onely increase the splendour and Majestie of their maturity, but also give an addition of delight and solace.

In which regard, you all being modest and discreet Ladies, and my selfe more much defective in braine, then otherwise able: in making your vertues shine gloriously, through the evident apparance of mine owne weakenesse, you should esteeme the better of mee, by how much I seeme the more cloudy and obscure. And consequently, I ought to have the larger scope of liberty, by plainely expressing what I am, and be the more patiently endured by you all, in saying what absurdly I shall; then I should be if my speeches savoured of absolute wisdome. I will therfore tell you a Tale, which shall not be of any great length, whereby you may comprehend, how carefully such things should be observed, which are commanded by them, as can effect matters by the power of enchantment, and how little delayance also ought to be in such, as would not have an enchantment to be hindered.

About a yeare already past since, there dwelt at Barletta, an honest man, called John de Barolo, who because he was of poore condition; for maintenance in his contented estate, provided himselfe of a Mule, to carry commodities from place to place, where Faires and Markets were in request, but most especially to Apuglia, buying and selling in the nature of a petty Chapman. Travelling thus thorow the Countreyes, he grew into great and familiar acquaintance, with one who named himselfe Pietro da Tresanti, following the same Trade of life as he did, carrying his commodities upon an Asse. In signe of amitie, according to the Countreyes custome, he never tearmed him otherwise, then by the name of Gossip Pietro and alwayes when he came to Barletta, he brought him to his own house, taking it as his Inne, entreating him very friendly, and in the best manner he could devise to doe. On the other side, Gossip Pietro being very poore, having but one simple habitation in the village of Tresanti, hardly sufficient for him, and an handsome young woman which he had to his wife, as also his Asse: evermore when John de Barolo came to Tresanti, he would bring him to his poore abiding, with all his uttermost abilitie of entertainement, in due acknowledgement of the courtesie he afforded to him at Barletta. But when he came to take repose in the night season, Gossip Pietro could not lodge him as gladly he would: because he had but one silly bed, wherein himselfe and his wife lay; so that John de Barolo was faigne to lie on a little straw, in a small stable, close adjoyning by his owne Mule and the Asse.

The woman understanding, what good and honest welcome, Gossip John afforded her husband, when he came to Barletta, was often very willing to goe lodge with an honest neighbour of hers, called Carapresa di Giudice Leo, because the two Gossips might both lie together in one bed; wherewith divers times she acquainted her Husband, but by no meanes he would admit it.

At one time among the rest, as she was making the same motion againe to her Husband, that his friend might be lodged in better manner: Gossip John thus spake to her. Good Zita Carapresa, never molest your selfe for me, because I lodge to mine owne contentment, and so much the rather, in regard that whensoever I list: I can convert my Mule into a faire young woman, to give mee much delight in the night-season, and afterward make her a Mule againe: thus am I never without her company.

The young woman wondring at these words, and beleeving he did not fable in them: she told them to her Husband, with this addition beside, Pietro (quoth she) if he be such a deare friend to thee, as thou hast often avouched to me; wish him to instruct thee in so rare a cunning, that thou maist make a Mule of me; then shalt thou have both an Asse and a Mule to travell withall about thy businesse, whereby thy benefit will be double: and when we returne home to our house, then thou maist make mee thy wife againe, in the same condition as I was before. Gossip Pietro, who was (indeed) but a very Coxecombe; beleeved also the words to be true, yeelding therefore the more gladly to her advise; and moving the matter to his Gossip John, to teach him such a wonderfull secret, which would redound so greatly to his benefit: but John began to disswade him from it, as having spoken it in merriment, yet perceiving, that no contradiction would serve to prevaile, thus he began.

Seeing you will needs have it so, let us rise to morrow morning before day, as in our travell we use to doe, and then I will shew you how it is to be done: onely I must and doe confesse, that the most difficult thing of all the rest, is, to fasten on the taile, as thou shalt see.

Gossip Pietro and his wife, could hardly take any rest all the night long, so desirous they were to have the deed done; and therefore when it drew towards day, up they arose, and calling Gossip John, he came presently to them in his shirt, and being in the Chamber with them, he said. I know not any man in the world, to whom I would disclose this secret, but to you, and therefore because you so earnestly desire it, I am the more willing to doe it. Onely you must consent, to doe whatsoever I say, if you are desirous to have it done. Faithfully they promised to performe all, whereupon John delivering a lighted Candle to Gossip Pietro, to hold in his hand, said. Marke well what I doe, and remember all the words I say: but be very carefull, that whatsoever thou hearest or seest, thou doe not speake one word, for then the enchantment will be utterly overthrowne, onely wish that the taile may be well set on, for therein consisteth all the cunning.

Gossip Pietro holding the Candle, and the woman being prepared as John had appointed her, she bowed her selfe forwardes with her hands set to the ground, even as if she stood upon foure feete. First with his hands he touched her head and face, saying, Heere is the goodly head of a Mule: then handling her disheveld haire, termed them the goodly mane of a Mule. Afterwardes, touching the body, armes, legs, and feete, gave them all the apt names (for those parts) belonging to a Mule, nothing else remaining, but onely the forming of the taile, which when Pietro perceived, how John was preparing to fasten it on (having no way misliked all his former proceeding:) he called to him, saying: Forbeare Gossippe John, my Mule shal have no taile at all, I am contented to have her without a taile. How now Gossip Pietro? answered John, What hast thou done? Thou hast mard all by this unadvised speaking, even when the worke was almost fully finished. It is no matter Gossip (answered Pietro) I can like my Mule better without a taile, then to see it set on in such manner.

The fond yong woman, more covetously addicted to gayne and commodity, then looking into the knavish intention of her Gossip John; began to grow greatly offended. Beast as thou art (quoth she to her Husband) why hast thou overthrowne both thine owne good Fortune and mine? Diddest thou ever see a Mule without a taile? Wouldst thou have had him make me a monster? Thou art wretchedly poore, and when we might have bin enriched for ever, by a secret knowne to none but our selves, thou art the Asse that hast defeated all, and made thy friend to become thine enemy. Gossippe John began to pacifie the woman, with solemne protestations of his still continuing friendship, albeit (afterwards) there was no further desiring of any more Mule-making: but Gossip Pietro fel to his former Trading onely with his Asse, as he was no lesse himselfe, and hee went no more with Gossip John to the Faires in Apuglia, neyther did he ever request, to have the like peece of service done for him.

Although there was much laughing at this Novell, the Ladies understanding it better, then Dioneus intended that they should have done, yet himselfe scarsely smiled. But the Novels being all ended, and the Sunne beginning to loose his heate; the Queene also knowing, that the full period of her government was come: dispossessing her selfe of the Crowne, shee placed it on the head of Pamphilus, who was the last of all to be honoured with this dignity; wherefore (with a gracious smile) thus she spake to him.

Sir, it is no meane charge which you are to undergo, in making amends (perhaps) for all the faults committed by my selfe and the rest, who have gone before you in the same authority; and, may it prove as prosperous unto you, as I was willing to create you our King. Pamphilus having received the Honor with a chearfull mind, thus answered. Madam, your sacred vertues, and those (beside) remaining in my other Subjects, will (no doubt) worke so effectually for me, that (as the rest have done) I shall deserve your generall good opinion. And having given order to the Master of the Houshold (as all his predecessors had formerly done, for every necessary occasion; he turned to the Ladies, who expected his gracious favour, and said.

Bright Beauties, it was the discretion of your late Soveraigne and Queene, in regard of ease and recreation unto your tyred spirits, to grant you free liberty, for discoursing on whatsoever your selves best pleased: wherefore, having enjoyed such a time of rest, I am of opinion, that it is best to returne once more to our wonted Law, in which respect, I would have every one to speake in this manner to morrow. Namely, of those men or women, who have done any thing bountifully or magnificently, either in matter of amity, or otherwise. The relation of such worthy arguments, will (doubtlesse) give an addition to our very best desires, for a free and forward inclination to good actions, whereby our lives (how short soever they bee) may perpetuate an ever-living renowne and fame, after our mortall bodies are converted into dust, which (otherwise) are no better then those of bruite beasts, reason onely distinguishing this difference, that as they live to perish utterly, so we respire to reigne in eternity.

The Theame was exceedingly pleasing to the whole Company; who being all risen, by permission of the new King, every one fel to their wonted recreations, as best agreed with their owne disposition; untill the houre for Supper came, wherein they were served very sumptuously. But being risen from the Table, they began their dances, among which, many sweet Sonnets were enterlaced, with such delicate Tunes as moved admiration. Then the King commanded Madam Neiphila, to sing a song in his name, or how her selfe stood best affected. And immediatly with a cleare and rare voice, thus she began.

THE SONG

THE CHORUS SUNG BY ALL THE COMPANIE

In the Spring season,
Maides have best reason,
To dance and sing;
With Chaplets of Flowers,
To decke up their Bowers,
And all in honour of the Spring.

I heard a Nimph that sate alone,
By a fountaines side:
Much her hard Fortune to bemone,
For still she cride:
Ah! Who will pitty her distresse,
That findes no foe like ficklenesse?
For truth lives not in men:
Poore soule, why live I then?
In the Spring season, etc.

Oh, How can mighty Love permit,
Such a faithlesse deed,
And not in justice punish it
As treasons meed?
I am undone through perjury,
Although I loved constantly:
But truth lives not in men,
Poore soule, why live I then?
In the Spring season, etc.

When I did follow Dyans traine,
As a loyall Maide,
I never felt oppressing paine,

Nor was dismaide.
But when I listened Loves alluring,
Then I wandred from assuring.
For truth lives not in men:
Poore soule, why live I then?
In the Spring season, etc.

Adiew to all my former joyes,
When I lived at ease,
And welcome now those sad annoies
Which do most displease.
And let none pitty her distresse,
That fell not, but by ficklenesse,
For truth lives not in men,
Alas! why live I then?
In the Spring season,
Maides have best reason,
To dance and sing;
With Chaplets of Flowers,
To decke up their Bowers,
And all in honour of the Spring.

This Song, most sweetly sung by Madame Neiphila, was especially commended, both by the King, and all the rest of the Ladies. Which being fully finished, the King gave order, that everie one should repaire to their Chambers, because a great part of the night was already spent.

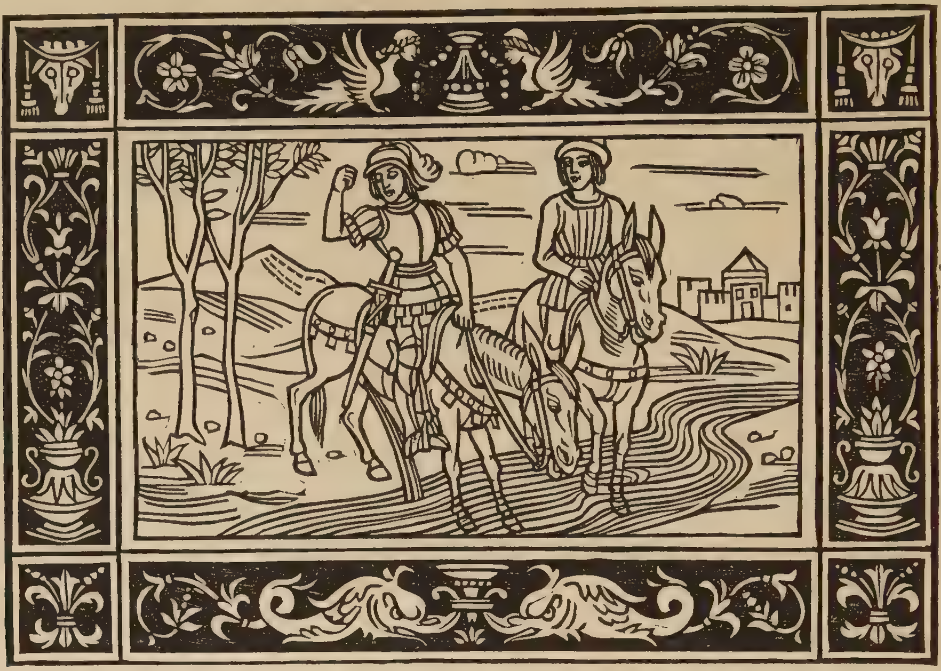
THE INDUCTION TO THE TENTH AND LAST DAY

WHEREON, UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF PAMPHILUS, THE SEVERALL ARGUMENTS DO CONCERNE SUCH PERSONS, AS EITHER BY WAY OF LIBERALITY, OR IN MAGNIFICENT MANNER, PERFORMED ANY WORTHY ACTION, FOR LOVE, FAVOUR, FRIENDSHIP, OR ANY OTHER HONOURABLE OCCASION.

ALREADY began certaine small Clouds in the West, to blush with a Vermillion tincture, when those in the East (having reached to their full heighth) looked like bright burnished Gold, by splendour of the Sun beames drawing neere unto them: when Pamphilus being risen, caused the Ladies, and the rest of his honourable companions to be called. When they were all assembled, and had concluded together on the place, whither they should walke for their mornings recreation: the King ledde on the way before, accompanied with the two Noble Ladies Philomena and Fiammetta, all the rest following after them, devising, talking, and answering to divers demands both what that day was to be don, as also concerning the proposed imposition for the forthcoming day.

After they had walked an indifferent space of time, and found the rayes of the Sunne to be over-piercing for them: they returned backe againe to the Pallace, as fearing to have their blood immoderately heated. Then rinsing their Glasses in the coole cleare running current, each tooke their mornings draught, and then walked into the milde shades about the Garden, untill they should bee summoned to dinner. Which was no sooner over-past, and such as slept, returned waking: they mette together againe in their wonted place, according as the King had appointed, where he gave command unto Madame Neiphila, that shee should (for that day) begin the first Novell, which she humbly accepting, thus began.

THE TENTH DAY, THE FIRST NOVELL



WHERIN MAY EVIDENTLY BE DISCERNED, THAT SERVANTS TO PRINCES AND GREAT LORDS, ARE MANY TIMES RECOMPENCED, RATHER BY THEIR GOOD FORTUNE, THEN IN ANY REGARD OF THEIR DUTIFULL SERVICES.

A FLORENTINE *knight, named Signior Rogiero de Figiovanni, became a servant to Alphonso, King of Spaine, who (in his owne opinion) seemed but sleightly to respect and reward him. In regard whereof, by a notable experiment, the King gave him a manifest testimony, that it was not through any defect in him, but onely occasioned by the Knights ill fortune; most bountifully recompencing him afterward.*

I DOE accept it (Worthy Ladies) as no mean favour, that the King hath given me the first place, to speake of such an honourable Argument, as Bounty and Magnificence is, which precious Jewell, even as the Sunne is the beauty, or ornament and bright glory of al heaven; so is bounty and magnificence the Crowne of all vertues. I shall then recount to you a short Novell, sufficiently pleasing, in mine owne opinion, and I hope (so much I dare rely on your judgements) both profitable, and worthy to be remembred.

You are to know then, that among other valiant Knights, which of long have lived in our City, one of them, and (perhappes) of as great merit as any, was one, named Signior Rogiero d'Figiovanni. He being rich, of great courage, and perceiving, that (in due consideration) the quality belonging to life, and the customes observed among our Tuscanes, were not answerable to his expectation, nor agreed with the disposition of his valour; determined to leave his native Countrey, and belong in service (for some time) to Alfonso, King of Spaine, whose fame was generally noised in all places, for excelling all other Princes in those times, for respect of mens well deservings, and bountifull requitall of their paines. Being provided in honorable order, both of Horses, Armes, and a competent train, he travelled to Spaine, where he was worthily entertained.

Signior Rogiero continuing there, living in honorable maner, and performing many admirable actions of arms; in short time he made himselfe sufficiently knowne, for a very valiant and famous man. And having remained there an indifferent long while, observing divers behaviours in the king: he saw, how he enclined himselfe first to one man, then to another, bestowing on one a Castle, a Towne on another, and Barronnies on divers, som-what indiscreetly, as giving away bountifully to men of no merit. And restraining all his favors from him, as seeming close fisted, and parting with nothing: he took it as a diminishing of his former reputation, and a great empayring of his fame; wherefore he resolved on his departure thence, and made his suit to the king that he might obtaine it. The king did grant it, bestowing on him one of the very best Mules, and the goodliest that ever was backt, a gift most highly pleasing to Rogiero, in regarde of the long journy he intended to ride. Which being deliverd, the king gave charge to one of his Gentlemen, to compasse such convenient meanes, as to ride thorow the country, and in the company of Signior Rogiero, yet in such manner, as he should not perceive, that the King had purposely sent him so to do. Respectively he should observe whatsoever he said concerning the king, his gesture, smiles, and other behavior, shaping his answers accordingly, and on the nexte morning to command his returne backe with him to the King.

Nor was the Gentleman slacke in this command, but noting Rogieroes departing forth of the city, he mounted on horseback likewise, and immediatly after came into his company, making him beleeve, that he journied towards Italy. Rogiero rode on the Mule which the king had given him, with diversity of speeches passing between them. About three of the clocke in the afternoone, the Gentleman said. It were not amisse Sir, (having such fit opportunitie) to Stable our horses for a while, till the heate be a little more overpast. So taking an Inne, and the horses being in the stable, they all staled except the Mule.

Being mounted againe, and riding on further, the Gentleman duely observed whatsoever Rogiero spake, and comming to the passage of a small River or Brooke: the rest of the beasts dranke, and not the Mule, but staled in the River: which Signior Rogiero seeing, clapping his hands on the Mules mane, hee said. What a wicked beast art thou? thou art just like thy Master that gave thee to mee. The Gentleman committed the words to memory, as he did many other passing from Rogiero, riding along the rest of the day, yet none in disparagement of the King, but rather highly in his commendation. And being the next morning mounted on horseback, seeming to hold on still the way for Tuscane: the Gentleman fulfilled the Kings command, causing Signior Rogiero to turne back againe with him, which willingly he yeelded to doe.

When they were come to the Court, and the King made acquainted with the words, which Rogiero spake to his Mule; he was called into the presence, where the King shewed him a gracious countenance, and demanded of him, why he had compared him to his Mule? Signior Rogiero nothing daunted, but with a bold and constant spirit, thus answered. Sir, I made the comparison, because, like as you give, where there is no conveniency, and bestow nothing where reason requireth: even so, the Mule would not stale where she should have done, but where was water too much before, there she did it. Beleeve me Signior Rogiero, replyed the King, if I have not given you such gifts, as (perhaps) I have done to divers other, farre inferiour to you in honour and merit; this happened not thorough any ignorance in me, as not knowing you to be a most valiant Knight, and well-worthy of speciall respect: but rather through your owne ill fortune, which would not suffer me to doe it, whereof she is guilty, and not I, as the truth thereof shall make it selfe apparant to you. Sir, answered Rogiero, I complaine not, because I have received no gift from you, as desiring thereby covetously to become the richer: but in regard you have not as yet any way acknowledged, what vertue is remaining in me. Neverthelesse, I allow your excuse for good and reasonable, and am heartely contented, to behold whatsoever you please; although I doe confidently credit you, without any other testimony.

The King conducted him then into the great Hall, where (as hee had before given order) stood two great Chests, fast lockt; and in the presence of all his Lords, the King thus spake. Signior Rogiero, in one of these Chests is mine imperiall Crowne, the Scepter Royall, the Mound, and many more of my richest girdles, rings, plate, and Jewels, even the very best that are mine: the other is full of earth onely. Chuse one of these two, and which thou makest election of; upon my Royall word thou shalt enjoy it. Hereby shalt thou evidently perceive, who hath bin ingreatful to the deservings, either I, or thine owne bad fortune. Rogiero seeing it was the kings pleasure to have it so; chose one of them, which the King caused presently to be opened, it approving to be the same that was full of earth, whereat the King smyling, said thus unto him.

You see Signior Rogiero, that what I said concerning your ill fortune, is very true: but questionlesse, your valour is of such desert, as I ought to oppose my selfe against all her malevolence. And because I know right, that you are not minded to become a Spaniard; I will give you neither Castle nor dwelling place: but I will bestow the Chest on you (in meer despight of your malicious fortune) which she so unjustly tooke away from you. Carry it home with you into your Countrey, that there it may make an apparant testimoney, in the sight of all your well-willers, both of your owne vertuous deservings, and my bounty. Signior Rogiero humbly receiving the Chest, and thanking his Majestie for so liberall a gift, returned home joyfully therewith, into his native Countrey of Tuscane.

THE SECOND NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED THAT GOOD MEN DOE SOMETIMES FALL INTO BAD CONDITIONS, ONELY OCCASIONED THERETO BY NECESSITY: AND WHAT MEANES ARE TO BE USED, FOR THEIR REDUCING TO GOODNESSE AGAINE.

GHINOTTO *di Tacco; tooke the Lord Abbot of Clugni as his prisoner, and cured him of a grievous disease, which he had in his stomacke, and afterward set him at liberty. The same Lord Abbot, when hee returned from the Court of Rome, reconciled Ghinotto to Pope Boniface; who made him a Knight, and Lord Prior of a goodly Hospitall.*

THE magnificence and Royall bounty, which King Alphonso bestowed on the Florentine knight, passed through the whole assembly with no mean applause, and the King (who gave it the greatest praise of al) commanded Madame Eliza, to take the second turne in order; whereupon, thus she began.

Faire Ladies, if a king shewed himselfe magnificently minded, and expressed his liberall bounty to such a man, as had done him good and honourable services: it can be termed no more then a vertuous deed well done, and becomming a King. But what will we say, when we heare that a Prelate of the Church, shewed himselfe wondrously magnificent, and to such a one as was his enemy: can any malicious tongue speake ill of him? Undoubtedly, no other answere is to be made, but the action of the King was meerely vertue, and that of the Prelate, no lesse then a miracle: for how can it be otherwise, when they are more greedily covetous then women, and deadly enemies to all liberality? And although every man (naturally) desireth revenge for injuries and abuses done unto him: yet men of the Church, in regard that dayly they preached patience, and commaund (above all things else) remission of sinnes: it would appeare a mighty blemish in them, to be more froward and furious then other men. But I am to speake of a reverend Prelate of the Church, as also concerning his munificent bounty, to one that was his enemy, and yet became his reconciled friend, as you shall perceive by my Novell.

Ghinotto di Tacco, for his insolent and stout robberies, became a man very farre famed, who being banished from Sienna, and an enemy to the Countes Disanta Fiore: prevailed so by his bold and headstrong perswasions, that the Towne of Raticonfani rebelled against the Church of Rome, wherein he remaining; all passengers whatsoever, travelling any way thereabout, were robde and rifled by his theeving Companions. At the time whereof now I speake, Boniface the eight, governed as Pope at Rome, and the Lord Abbot of Clugni (accounted to be one of the richest Prelates in the world) came to Rome, and there either by some surfeit, excesse of feeding, or otherwise, his stomacke being grievously offended and pained; the Phisitians advised him, to travell to the Bathes at Sienna, where he should receive immediate cure. In which respect, his departure being licenced by the Pope, to set onward thither, with great and pompous Cariages, of Horses, Mules, and a goodly traine, without hearing any rumour of the theevish Consorts.

Ghinotto di Tacco, being advertised of his comming, spred about his scouts and nettes, and without missing so much as one Page, shut up the Abbot, with all his traine and baggage, in a place of narrow restraint, out of which he could by no meanes escape. When this was done, he sent one of his most sufficient attendants (well accompanyed) to the Lord Abbot, who said to him in his Masters name, that if his Lordship were so pleased, hee might come and visite Ghinotto at his Castle. Which the Abbot hearing, answered chollerickly, that he would not come thither, because hee had nothing to say to Ghinotto: but meant to proceed on in his journy, and would faine see, who durst presume to hinder his passe. To which rough words, the messenger thus mildely answered. My Lord (quoth he) you are arrived in such a place, where we feare no other force, but the all-controlling power of heaven, clearely exempted from the Popes thunder-cracks, of maledictions, interdictions, excommunications, or whatsoever else: and therefore it would bee much better for you, if you pleased to do as Ghinotto adviseth you.

During the time of this their interparlance, the place was suddenly round ingirt with strongly armed theeves, and the Lord Abbot perceiving, that both he and all his followers were surprized: tooke his way (though very impatiently) towards the Castle, and likewise all his company and carriages with him. Being dismounted, hee was conducted (as Ghinotto had appointed) all alone, into a small Chamber of the Castle, it being very darke and uneasie: but the rest of his traine, every one according to his ranck and quality, were all well lodged in the Castle, their horses, goods and all things else, delivered into secure keeping, without the least touch of injury or prejudice. All which being orderly done, Ghinotto himselfe went to the Lord Abbot, and said. My Lord, Ghinotto, to whom you are a welcome guest, requesteth, that it might be your pleasure to tell him, whither you are travelling, and upon what occasion?

The Lord Abbot being a very wise man,

and his angry distemper more moderately qualified; revealed whither he went, and the cause of his going thither. Which when Ghinotto had heard, hee departed courteously from him, and began to consider with himselfe, how he might cure the Abbot; yet without any Bathe. So, commanding a good fire to be kept continually in his small Chamber, and very good attendance on him: the next morning, he came to visite him againe, bringing a faire white Napkin on his arme, and in it two slices or toasts of fine Manchet, a goodly cleare Glasse, full of the purest white-Bastard of Corniglia (but indeed, of the Abbots owne provision brought thither with him) and then hee spoke to him in this manner.

My Lord, when Ghinotto was yonger then now he is, he studyed Physicke, and he commanded me to tell you, that the very best medicine, he could ever learne, against any disease in the stomacke, was this which he had provided for your Lordship, as an especial preparative, and which he should finde to be very comfortable. The Abbot, who had a better stomacke to eate, then any will or desire to talke: although hee did it somewhat disdainfully, yet hee eate up both the toastes, and roundly dranke off the Glasse of Bastard. Afterward, divers other speeches passed betweene them, the one still advising in Phisicall manner, and the other seeming to care little for it: but moved many questions concerning Ghinotto, and earnestly requesting to see him. Such speeches as savoured of the Abbots discontentment, and came from him in passion; were clouded with courteous acceptance, and not the least signe of any mislike: but assuring his Lordship, that Ghinotto intended very shortly to see him, and so they parted for that time.

Nor returned he any more, till the next morning with the like two toastes of bread, and such another Glasse of white Bastard, as he had brought him at the first, continuing the same course for divers dayes after: till the Abbot had eaten (and very hungerly too) a pretty store of dryed Beanes, which Ghinotto purposely, (yet secretly) had hidden in the Chamber. Whereupon he demaunded of him (as seeming to be so enjoyned by his pretended master) in what temper he found his stomacke now? I should finde my stomacke well enough (answered the Lord Abbot) if I could get forth of thy masters fingers, and then have some good food to feed on: for his medicines have made me so soundly stomackt, that I am ready to starve with hunger.

When Ghinotto was gone from him, hee then prepared a very faire Chamber for him, adorning it with the Abbots owne rich hangings, as also his Plate and other moveables, such as were alwayes used for his service. A costly dinner he provided likewise, whereto he invited divers of the Towne, and many of the Abbots chiefest followers: then going to him againe the next morning, he said. My Lord, seeing you doe feele your stomacke so well, it is time you should come forth of the Infirmary. And taking him by the hand, he brought him into the prepared Chamber, where he left him with his owne people, and went to give order for the dinners serving in, that it might be performed in magnificent manner.

The Lord Abbot recreated himselfe a while with his owne people, to whom he recounted, the course of his life since hee saw them; and they likewise told him, how kindly they had bin initeated by Ghinotto. But when dinner time was come, the Lord Abbot and all his company, were served with costly viands and excellent Wines, without Ghinottoes making himselfe knowne to the Abbot: till after he had beene entertained some few dayes in this order: into the great Hall of the Castle, Ghinotto caused all the Abbots goods and furniture to bee brought, and likewise into a spacious Court, wheron the windowes of the said Court gazed, all his mules and horses, with their sumpters, even to the very silliest of them, which being done, Ghinotto went to the Abbot, and demaunded of him, how he felt his stomacke now, and whether it would serve him to venter on horsebacke as yet, or no? The Lord Abbot answered, that he found his stomacke perfectly recovered, his body strong enough to endure travell, and all things well, so hee were delivered from Ghinotto.

Hereupon, he brought him into the hall where his furniture was, as also all his people, and commanding a window to be opned, wherat he might behold his horses, he said. My Lord, let me plainely give you to understand, that neither cowardise, or basenesse of minde, induced Ghinotto di Tacco (which is my selfe) to become a lurking robber on the high-wayes, an enemy to the Pope, and so (consequently) to the Romane Court: but onely to save his owne life and honour, knowing himselfe to be a Gentleman cast out of his owne house, and having (beside) infinite enemies. But because you seeme to be a worthy Lord, I will not (although I have cured your stomacks disease) deale with you as I doe to others, whose goods (when they fall into my power) I take such part of as I please: but rather am well contented, that my necessities being considered by your selfe, you spare me out a proportion of the things you have heere, answerable to your owne liking. For all are present here before you, both in this Hall, and in the Court beneath, free from any spoyle, or the least impairing. Wherefore, give a part, or take all, if you please, and then depart hence when you will, or abide heere still, for now you are at your owne free liberty.

The Lord Abbot wondred not a little, that a robber on the high wayes, should have such a bold and liberall spirit, which appeared very pleasing to him; and instantly, his former hatred and spleene against Ghinotto, became converted into cordiall love and kindnes, so that (imbracing him in his armes) he said. I protest upon my vow made to Religion, that to win the love of such a man, as I plainely perceive thee to be: I would undergo far greater injuries, then those which I have received at thy hands. Accursed be cruell destiny, that forced thee to so base a kind of life, and did not blesse thee with a fairer fortune. After he had thus spoken, he left there the greater part of all his goods, and returned backe againe to Rome, with few horses, and a meaner traine.

During these passed accidents, the Pope had received intelligence of the Lord Abbots surprizall, which was not a little displeasing to him: but when he saw him returned, he demaunded, what benefit he received at the Bathes? Whereto the Abbot, merrily smyling, thus replyed. Holy Father, I met with a most skilfull Physitian neerer hand, whose experience is beyond the power of the Bathes, for by him I am very perfectly cured: and so discoursed all at large. The Pope laughing heartely, and the Abbot continuing on still his report; moved with an high and magnificent courage, he demaunded one gracious favour of the Pope: who imagining that he would request a matter of greater moment, then he did, freely offered to grant, whatsoever he desired.

Holy Father, answered the Lord Abbot, all the humble suit which I make to you, is, that you would be pleased to receive into your grace and favor, Ghinotto di Tacco my Physitian, because among all the vertuous men, deserving to have especial account made of them I never met with any equall to him both in honour and honesty. Whatsoever injury he did to me, I impute it as a greater in-fortune, then any way he deserveth to be charged withall. Which wretched condition of his, if you were pleased to alter, and bestow on him some better meanes of maintenance, to live like a worthy man, as he is no lesse: I make no doubt, but (in very short time) hee will appeare as pleasing to your holinesse, as (in my best judgement) I thinke him to be.

The Pope, who was of a magnanimious spirit, and one that highly affected men of vertue, hearing the commendable motion made by the Abbot; returned answere, that he was as willing to grant it, as the other desired it, sending Letters of safe conduct for his comming thither. Ghinotto receiving such assurance from the Court of Rome, came thither immediatly, to the great joy of the Lord Abbot: and the Pope finding him to be a man of valor and worth, upon reconciliation, remitted all former errors, creating him knight, and Lord Prior of the very chiefest Hospitall in Rome. In which Office he lived long time after, as a loyall servant to the Church, and an honest thankefull friend to the Lord Abbot of Clugny.

THE THIRD NOVELL

SHEWING IN AN EXCELLENT AND LIVELY DEMONSTRATION, THAT ANY ESPECIALL HONOURABLE VERTUE, PERSEVERING AND DWELLING IN A TRULY NOBLE SOULE, CANNOT BE VIOLENCED OR CONFOUNDED, BY THE MOST POLITICKE ATTEMPTES OF MALICE AND ENVY.

Mithridanes *envying the life and liberality of Nathan, and travelling thither, with a setled resolution to kill him: chaunceth to conferre with Nathan unknowne. And being instructed by him, in what manner he might best performe the bloody deede, according as hee gave direction, hee meeteth with him in a small Thicket or Woode, where knowing him to be the same man, that taught him how to take away his life: Confounded with shame, hee acknowledgeth his horrible intention, and becommeth his loyall friend.*

It appeared to the whole assembly, that they had heard a matter of mervaile, for a Lord Abbot to performe any magnificent action: but their admiration ceasing in silence, the King commanded Philostratus to follow next, who forthwith thus began.

Honourable Ladies, the bounty and magnificense of Alphonso King of Spaine, was great indeede, and that done by the Lord Abbot of Clugny, a thing (perhaps) never heard of in any other. But it will seeme no lesse mervailous to you, when you heare, how one man, in expression of great liberality to another man, that earnestly desired to kill him; should bee secretly disposed to give him his life, which had bin lost, if the other would have taken it, as I purpose to acquaint you withall, in a short Novell.

Most certaine it is, at least, if Faith may bee given to the report of certaine Genewayes, and other men resorting to those remote parts, that in the Country of Cathaya, there lived somtime a Gentleman, rich beyond comparison, and named Nathan. He having his living adjoyning to a great common rode-way, whereby men travayled from the East to the West (as they did the like from the West unto the East, as having no other means of passage) and being of a bountifull and chearfull disposition, which he was willing to make knowen by experience: he summoned together many Master Masons and Carpenters, and there erected (in a short time) one of the greatest, goodliest, and most beautifull houses (in manner of a Princes Pallace) that ever was seene in all those quarters.

With movables and all kinde of furnishment, befitting a house of such outward apparance, hee caused it to be plentifully stored, onely to receive, entertaine, and honor all Gentlemen or other Travailers whatsoever, as had occasion to passe that way, being not unprovided also of such a number of servants, as might continuallie give attendance on all commers and goers. Two and fifty severall gates, standing alway wide open, and over each of them in great golden carracters was written, Welcome, welcome, and gave free admission to all commers whatsoever.

In this honourable order (observed as his estated custom) he persevered so long a while, as not onely the East parts, but also those in the west, were every where acquainted with his fame and renown. Being already well stept into yeares, but yet not wearie (therefore) of his great charge and liberality: it fortuned, that the rumor of his noble Hospitality, came to the eare of another gallant Gentleman, named Mithridanes, living in a Countrey not farre off from the other.

This Gentleman, knowing himselfe no lesse wealthy then Nathan, and enviously repining at his vertue and liberality, determined in his mind, to dim and obscure the others bright splendor, by making himselfe farre more famous. And having built a Palace answerable to that of Nathans, with like windings of gates, and welcom inscriptions; he beganne to extend immeasurable courtesies, unto all such as were disposed to visite him: so that (in a short while) hee grew very famous in infinite places. It chanced on a day, as Mithridanes sate all alone within the goodly Court of his Pallace: a poore woman entred at one of the gates, craving an almes of him, which she had; and returned in againe at a second gate, comming also to him, and had a second almes; continuing so still a dozen times; but at the thirteenth returning, Mithridanes saide to her: Good Woman, you goe and come very often, and still you are served with almes. When the old Woman heard these words, she said. O the liberality of Nathan! How honourable and wonderfull is that? I have past through two and thirty gates of his Palace, even such as are here, and at every one I receyved an almes, without any knowledgement taken of me, either by him, or any of his followers: and heere I have past but through thirteene gates, and am there both acknowledged and taken. Farewell to this house, for I never meane to visit it any more; with which words shee departed thence, and never after came thither againe.

When Mithridanes had a while pondered on her speeches, hee waxed much discontented, as taking the words of the olde woman, to extoll the renowne of Nathan, and darken or ecclipse his glorie, whereupon he said to himselfe. Wretched man as I am, when shall I attaine to the height of liberality, and performe such wonders, as Nathan doth? In seeking to surmount him, I cannot come neere him in the very meanest. Undoubtedly, I spend all my endeavour but in vaine, except I rid the world of him, which (seeing his age will not make an end of him) I must needs do with my own hands. In which furious and bloody determination (without revealing his intent to any one) he mounted on horse-backe, with few attendants in his company, and after three dayes journey, arrived where Nathan dwelt. He gave order to his men, to make no shew of beeing his servants, or any way to acknowledge him: but to provide them selves of convenient lodgings, untill they heard other tydings from him.

About Evening, and (in this manner) alone by himselfe, neere to the Palace of Nathan, he met him solitarily walking, not in pompous apparrell, whereby to bee distinguished from a meaner man: and, because he knew him not, neyther had heard any relation of his description, he demanded of him, if he knew where Nathan then was? Nathan, with a chearfull countenance, thus replyed. Faire Syr, there is no man in these parts, that knoweth better how to shew you Nathan then I do; and therefore, if you be so pleased, I will bring you to him. Mithridanes said, therein he should do him a great kindnesse: albeit (if it were possible) he would bee neyther knowne nor seene of Nathan. And that (quoth he) can I also do sufficiently for you, seeing it is your will to have it so, if you will goe along with me.

Dismounting from his horse, he walked on with Nathan, diversly discoursing, untill they came to the Pallace, where one of the servants taking Mithridanes his horse, Nathan rounded the fellow in the eare, that he should give warning to all throughout the House, for revealing to the Gentleman, that he was Nathan; as accordingly it was performed. No sooner were they within the Pallace, but he conducted Mithridanes into a goodly chamber, wher none (as yet) had seene him, but such as were appointed to attend on him reverently; yea, and he did himselfe greatly honor him, as being loth to leave his company.

While thus Mithridanes conversed with him, he desired to know (albeit he respected him much for his yeares) what he was. Introth Sir, answered Nathan, I am one of the meanest servants to Nathan, and from my child-hood, have made my selfe thus olde in his service: yet never hath he bestowed any other advancement on mee, then as you now see; in which respect, howsoever other men may commend him, yet I have no reason at all to do it. These Words, gave some hope to Mithridanes, that with a little more counsell, he might securely put in execution his wicked determination. Nathan likewise demaunded of him (but in very humble manner) of whence, and what he was, as also the businesse inviting him thither: offering him his utmost aide and counsell, in what soever consisted in his power.

Mithridanes sat an indifferent while meditating with his thoghts before he would returne any answer: but at the last, concluding to repose confidence in him (in regard of his pretended discontentment) with many circumstantial perswasions, first for fidelity, next for constancie, and lastly for counsell and assistance, he declared to him truly what he was, the cause of his comming thither, and the reason urging him thereto. Nathan hearing these words, and the detestable deliberation of Mithridanes, became quite changed in himself: yet wisely making no outward appearance thereof, with a bold courage and setled countenance, thus he replyed.

Mithridanes, thy Father was a Noble Gentleman, and (in vertuous qualities) inferiour to none, from whom (as now I see) thou desirest not to degenerate, having undertaken so bold and high an enterprise, I meane, in being liberall and bountifull to all men. I do greatly commend the envy which thou bearest to the vertue of Nathan: because if there were many more such men, the world that is now wretched and miserable, would become good and conformable. As for the determination which thou hast disclosed to mee, I have sealed it up secretly in my soule: wherein I can better give thee counsell, then any especiall helpe or furtherance: and the course which I would have thee to observe, followeth thus in few words.

This window, which we now looke forth at, sheweth thee a smal wood or thicket of trees, being litle more then the quarter of a miles distance hence; whereto Nathan usually walketh every morning, and there continueth time long enough: there maist thou very easily meet him, and do whatsoever thou intendest to him. If thou kilst him, because thou maist with safety returne home unto thine owne abiding, take not the same way which guided thee thither, but another, lying on the left hand, and directing speedily out of the wood, as being not so much haunted as the other, but rather free from all resort, and surest for visiting thine owne countrey, after such a dismall deed is done.

When Mithridanes had receyved this instruction, and Nathan was departed from him; hee secretly gave intelligence to his men, (who likewise were lodged, as welcom strangers, in the same house) at what place they should stay for him the next morning. Night being passed over, and Nathan risen, his heart altred not a jot from his counsel given to Mithridanes, much lesse changed from anie part thereof: but all alone by himselfe, walked on to the wood, the place appointed for his death. Mithridanes also being risen, taking his Bow and Sword (for other weapons had he none) mounted on horsbacke, and so came to the wood, where (somewhat farre off) hee espyed Nathan walking, and no creature with him. Dismounting from his horse, he had resolved (before he would kill him) not onely to see, but also to heare him speake: so stepping roughly to him, and taking hold of the bonnet on his head, his face being then turned from him, he sayde. Old man, thou must dye. Whereunto Nathan made no other answer, but thus: Why then (belike) I have deserved it.

When Mithridanes heard him speake, and looked advisedly on his face, he knew him immediately to be the same man, that had entertained him so lovingly, conversed with him so familiarly, and counselled him so faithfully: all which overcomming his former fury, his harsh nature became meerly confounded with shame: So throwing downe his drawne sword, which he held readily prepared for the deede: he prostrated himselfe at Nathans feet, and in teares, spake in this manner. Now do I manifestly know (most loving Father) your admired bounty and liberalitie; considering, with what industrious providence, you made the meanes for your comming hither, prodigally to bestow your life on me, which I have no right unto, although you were so willing to part with it. But those high and supreame powers, more carefull of my dutie, then I my selfe: even at the very instant, and when it was most needfull, opened the eyes of my better understanding, which infernall envy had closed up before. And therefore, looke how much you have bin forward to pleasure me; so much the more shame and punishment, I confesse my heinous transgression hath justly deserved: take therefore on me (if you please) such revenge, as you thinke (in justice) answerable to my sin.

Nathan lovingly raised Mithridanes from the ground, then kissing his cheeke, and tenderly embracing him, he said. Sonne, thou needest not to aske, much less to obtaine pardon, for any enterprise of thine, which thou canst not yet terme to be good or bad: because thou soughtest not to bereave me of my life, for any hatred thou barest me, but onely in coveting to be reputed the Woorthier man. Take then this assurance of me, and beleeve it constantly, that there is no man living, whom I love and honour, as I do thee: considering the greatnesse of thy minde, which consisteth not in the heaping up of money, as wretched and miserable Worldlings make it their onely felicity; but, contending in bounty to spend what is thine, didst hold it for no shame to kil me, thereby to make thy selfe so much the more worthily famous.

Nor is it any matter to be wondred at, in regard that Emperors, and the greatest Kings, hadde never made such extendure of their Dominions, and consequently of their renowne, by any other Art, then killing; yet not one man onely, as thou wouldst have done: but infinite numbers, burning whole Countries, and making desolate huge Townes and Cities, onely to enlarge their dominion, and further spreading of their fame. Wherefore, if for the increasing of thine owne renowne, thou wast desirous of my death: it is no matter of novelty, and therefore deserving the lesse mervaile, seeing men are slaine daily, and all for one purpose or other.

Mithridanes, excusing no further his malevolent deliberation, but rather commending the honest defence, which Nathan made on his behalfe; proceeded so farre in after discoursing, as to tel him plainely, that it did wondrously amaze him, how he durst come to the fatall appointed place, himselfe having so exactly plotted and contrived his owne death: whereunto Nathan returned this aunswere.

I would not have thee Mithridanes, to wonder at my counsel or determination; because, since age hath made mee Maister of mine owne will, and I resolved to doe that, wherein thou hast begun to follow me:

never came any man to mee, whom I did not content (if I could) in any thing he demanded of me. It was thy fortune to come for my life, which when I saw thee so desirous to have it, I resolved immediately to bestow it on thee: and so much the rather, because thou shouldst not be the onely man, that ever departed hence, without enjoying whatsoever hee demanded. And, to the end thou mightst the more assuredly have it, I gave thee that advice, least by not enjoying mine, thou shouldest chance to loose thine owne. I have had the use of it full fourescore yeares, with the consummation of all my delights and pleasures: and well I know, that according to the course of Nature (as it fares with other men, and generally all things else) it cannot bee long before it must leave mee.

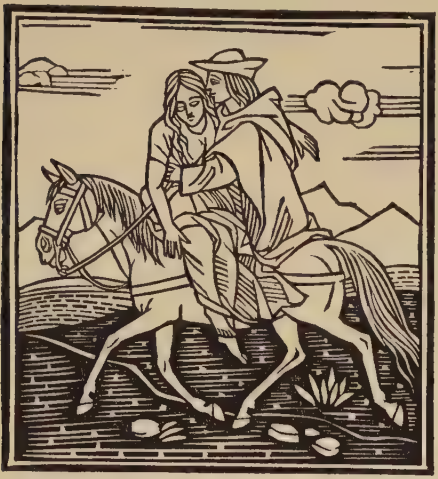
Wherefore, I hold it much better for me to give it away freely, as I have alwayes done my goods and treasure; then bee curious in keeping it, and suffer it to be taken from me (whether I will or no) by Nature. A small gift it is, if time make me up the full summe of an hundred yeares: how miserable is it then, to stand beholding but for foure or five, and all of them vexation too? Take it then I intreate thee, if thou wilt have it; for I never met with any man before (but thy selfe) that did desire it, nor (perhaps) shall finde any other to request it: for the longer I keepe it, the worse it wil be esteemed: and before it grow contemptible, take it I pray thee.

Mithridanes, being exceedingly confounded with shame, bashfully sayde: Fortune fore-fend, that I should take away a thing so precious as your life is, or once to have so vile a thought of it as lately I had; but rather then I would diminish one day thereof, I could wish, that my time might more amply enlarge it. Forthwith aunswered Nathan, saying. Wouldst thou (if thou couldst) shorten thine owne dayes, onely to lengthen mine? Why then thou wouldest have me to do that to thee, which (as yet) I never did unto any man, namely, robbe thee, to enrich my selfe. I will enstruct thee in a much better course, if thou wilt be advised by mee. Lusty and young, as now thou art, thou shalt dwell heere in my house, and be called by the name of Nathan. Aged, and spent with yeares, as thou seest I am, I will goe live in thy house, and bee called by the name of Mithridanes. So, both the name and place shall illustrate thy Glorie, and I live contentedly, without the very least thought of envie.

Deare Father, answered Mithridanes, if I knew so well howe to direct mine owne actions, as you doe, and alwayes have done, I would gladly accept your most liberall offer: but because I plainlie perceive, that my very best endeavours, must remayne darkened by the bright renowne of Nathan: I will never seeke to impayre that in another, which I cannot (by any means) increase in my selfe, but (as you have worthily taught me) live contented with my owne condition.

After these, and many more like loving speeches had passed between them; according as Nathan very instantly requested, Mithridanes returned back with him to the Pallace, where many dayes he highly honored and respected him, comforting and counselling him, to persever alwayes in his honourable determination. But in the end, when Mithridanes could abide there no longer, because necessary occasions called him home: he departed thence with his men, having found by good experience, that hee could never goe beyond Nathan in liberality.

THE FOURTH NOVELL



WHEREIN IS SHEWNE, THAT TRUE LOVE HATH ALWAYES BIN, AND SO STILL IS, THE OCCASION OF MANY GREAT AND WORTHY COURTESIES.

SIGNIOR *Gentile de Carisendi, being come from Modena, took a Gentlewoman, named Madam Catharina, forth of a grave, wherin she was buried for dead: which act he did, in regard of his former honest affection to the said Gentlewoman. Madame Catharina remaining there afterward, and delivered of a goodly Sonne: was (by Signior Gentile) delivered to her owne Husband, named Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico, and the yong infant with her.*

BY judgment of all the honorable assembly, it was reputed wonderfull, that a man should be so bountifull, as to give away his owne life, and to his hatefull enemy. In which respect, it passed with generall affirmation, that Nathan (in the vertue of liberallity) had exceeded Alphonso, King of Spain, but (especially) the Abbot of Clugny. So, after every one had delivered their opinion, the King, turning himselfe to Madame Lauretta, gave her such a signe, as well instructed her understanding, that she should be the next in order, whereto she gladly yeelding, began in this manner.

Youthfull Ladies, the discourses already past, have been so worthy and magnificent, yea, reaching to such a height of glorious splendour; as (me thinkes) there remaineth no more matter, for us that are yet to speake, whereby to enlarge so famous an Argument, and in such manner as it ought to be: except we lay hold on the actions of love, wherein is never any want of subject, it is so faire and spacious a field to walke in. Wherefore, as well in behalfe of the one, as advancement of the other, whereto our instant age is most of all inclined: I purpose to acquaint you with a generous and magnificent act, of an amourous Gentleman, which when it shall be duely considered on, perhaps will appeare equall to any of the rest. At least, if it may passe for currant, that men may give away their treasures, forgive mighty injuries, and lay downe life it selfe, honour and renowne (which is farre greater) to infinite dangers, only to attaine any thing esteemed and affected.

Understand then (Gracious hearers) that in Bologna, a very famous City of Lombardie, there lived sometime a Knight, most highly respected for his vertues, named Signior Gentile de Carisendi, who (in his yonger dayes) was enamoured of a Gentlewoman, called Madam Catharina, the Wife of Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico. And because during the time of his amourous pursuite, he found but a sorry enterchange of affection from the Lady; hee went (as hopelesse of any successe) to be Potestate of Modena, whereto he was called by place and order.

At the same time, Signior Nicoluccio being absent from Bologna, and his Lady at a Farme-house of his in the Countrey (about three miles distant from the City) because she was great with child, and somewhat neere the time of her teeming: it came to passe, that some dangerous accident befell her, which was so powerfull in operation, as no signe of life appeared remained in her, but she was reputed (even in the judgement of the best Phisitians, whereof she wanted no attendance) to be verily dead. And because in the opinion of her parents and neerest kinred, the time for her deliverance was yet so farre off, as the Infant within her, wanted much of a perfect creature: they made the lesse mourning; but in the next Church, as also the vault belonging to her Ancestors, they gave her buriall very speedily.

Which tydings comming to the hearing of Signior Gentile, by one that was his endeared friend: Although (while she lived) he could never be gracious in her favour, yet her so sudden death did greatly grieve him, whereupon he discoursed in this sort with himselfe. Deare Madame Catharina, I am not a little sorry for thy death, although (during thy life-time) I was scarcely worthy of one kind looke: Yet now being dead, thou canst not prohibite me, but I may robbe thee of a kisse. No sooner had hee spoke the words, but it beeing then night, and taking such order, as none might know of his departure: hee mounted on horsebacke, accompanied onely with one servant, and stayed no where, till hee came to the vault where the Lady was buried. Which when he had opened, with instruments convenient for the purpose, he descended downe into the vault, and kneeled downe by the Beere whereon she lay, and in her wearing garments, according to the usuall manner; with teares trickling mainly downe his cheekes, he bestowed infinite sweet kisses on her.

But as we commonly see, that mens desires are never contented, but still will presume on further advantages, especially such as love entirely: so fared it with Gentile, who being once minded to get him gone, as satisfied with the oblation of his kisses; would needs yet step backe againe, saying. Why should I not touch her yvory breast, the Adamant that drew all desires to adore her? Ah let me touch it now, for never hereafter can I bee halfe so happy. Overcome with this alluring appetite, gently he laid his hand upon her breast, with the like awefull respect, as if she were living, and holding it so an indifferent while: either he felt, or his imagination so perswaded him, the heart of the Lady to beate and pant. Casting off all fond feare, and the warmth of his increasing the motion: his inward soule assured him, that she was not dead utterly, but had some small sense of life remaining in her, whereof he would needs be further informed.

So gently as possible he could, and with the helpe of his man, he tooke her forth of the monument, and laying her softly on his horse before him, conveighed her closely to his house in Bologna. Signior Gentile had a worthy Lady to his Mother, a woman of great wisdome and vertue, who understanding by her Sonne, how matters had happened, moved with compassion, and suffering no one in the house to know what was done, made a good fire, and very excellent Bathe, which recalled back againe wrong-wandering life. Then fetching a vehement sigh, opening her eyes, and looking very strangly about her, she said. Alas! where am I now? whereto the good old Lady kindly replyed, saying. Comfort your selfe Madame, for you are in a good place.

Her spirits being in better manner met together, and she still gazing every way about her, not knowing well where she was, and seeing Signior Gentile standing before her: he entreated his mother to tell her by what meanes she came thither; which the good old Lady did, Gentile himselfe helping to relate the whole history. A while she grieved and lamented, but afterward gave them most hearty thankes, humbly requesting, that, in regard of the love he had formerly borne her, in his house she might finde no other usage, varying from the honour of her selfe and her Husband, and when day was come, to be conveighed home to her owne house. Madame, answered Signior Gentile, whatsoever I sought to gaine from you in former dayes, I never meane, either here, or any where else, to motion any more. But seeing it hath been my happy fortune, to prove the blessed means, of reducing you from death to life: you shal find no other entertainment here, then as if you were mine owne Sister. And yet the good deed which I have this night done for you, doth well deserve some courteous requitall: in which respect, I would have you not to deny me one favour, which I will presume to crave of you. Whereto the Lady lovingly replyed, that she was willing to grant it; provided, it were honest, and in her power: whereto Signior Gentile thus answered.

Madame, your parents, kindred and friends, and generally all throughout Bologna, doe verily thinke you to be dead, wherefore there is not any one, that will make any inquisition after you: in which regard, the favour I desire from you, is no more but to abide here secretly with my Mother, untill such time as I returne from Modena, which shall be very speedily. The occasion why I move this motion, aymeth at this end, that in presence of the chiefest persons of our City, I may make a gladsome present of you to your Husband. The Lady knowing her selfe highly beholding to the Knight, and the request he made to be very honest: disposed her selfe to doe as he desired (although she earnestly longed, to glad her parents and kindred with seeing her alive) and made her promise him on her faith, to effect it in such manner, as he pleased to appoint and give her direction.

Scarcely were these words concluded, but she felt the custome of women to come upon her, with the paines and throwes incident to childing: wherefore, with helpe of the aged Lady, Mother to Signior Gentile, it was not long before her deliverance of a goodly Sonne, which greatly augmented the joy of her and Gentile, who tooke order, that all things belonging to a woman in such a case, were not wanting, but she was as carefully respected, even as if she had been his owne Wife. Secretly he repaired to Modena, where having given direction for his place of authority; he returned back againe to Bologna, and there made preparation for a great and solemne feast, appointing who should be his invited guests, the very chiefest persons in Bologna, and (among them) Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico the especiall man.

After he was dismounted from horsebacke, and found so good company attending for him (the Lady also, more faire and healthful then ever, and the Infant lively disposed) he sate downe at the Table with his guests, causing them to be served in most magnificent manner, with plenty of all delicates that could be devised, and never before was there such a Joviall feast. About the ending of dinner, closely he made the Lady acquainted with his further intention, and likewise in what order every thing should be done, which being effected, he returned to his company, and used these speeches.

Honourable friends, I remember a discourse sometime made unto me, concerning the Countrey of Persia, and a kind of custome there observed, not to be misliked in mine opinion. When any one intended to honour his friend in effectuall manner, he invited him home to his house, and there would shew him the thing, which with greatest love he did respect; were it Wife, Friend, Sonne, Daughter, or any thing else whatsoever; wherewithall hee spared not to affirme, that as he shewed him those choyce delights, the like view he should have of his heart, if with any possibility it could be done; and the very same custome I meane now to observe here in our City. You have vouchsafed to honour me with your presence, at this poore homely dinner of mine, and I will welcome you after the Persian manner, in shewing you the Jewell, which (above all things else in the world) I ever have most respectively esteemed. But before I doe it, I crave your favourable opinions in a doubt, which I will plainely declare unto you.

If any man having in his house a good and faithfull servant, who falling into extremity of sickenesse, shall be throwne forth into the open street, without any care or pitty taken on him: A stranger chanceth to passe by, and (moved with compassion of his weakenesse) carryeth him home to his owne house, where using all charitable diligence, and not sparing any cost, he recovereth the sicke person to his former health. I now desire to know, if keeping the said restored person, and imploying him about his owne businesse: the first Master (by pretending his first right) may lawfully complaine of the second, and yeeld him backe againe to the first master, albeit he doe make challenge of him?

All the Gentlemen, after many opinions passing among them, agreed altogether in one sentence, and gave charge to Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico, (because he was an excellent and elegant speaker) to give answere for them all. First, he commended the custome observed in Persia, saying, he jumpt in opinion with all the rest, that the first Master had no right at all to the servant, having not onely (in such necessity) forsaken him, but also cast him forth into the comfortlesse street. But for the benefits and mercy extended to him; it was more then manifest, that the recovered person, was become justly servant to the second Master, and in detayning him from the first, hee did not offer him any injury at all. The whole Company sitting at the Table (being all very wise and worthy men) gave their verdict likewise with the confession of Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico. Which answere did not a little please the Knight; and so much the rather, because Nicoluccio had pronounced it, affirming himselfe to be of the same minde.

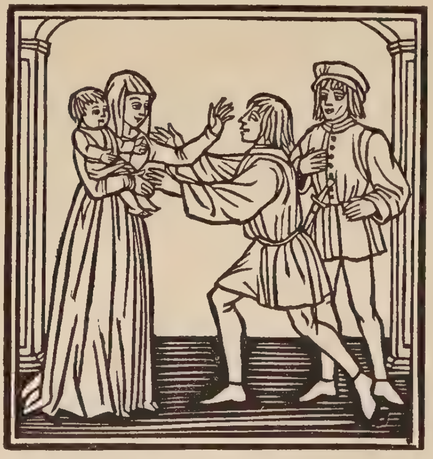
So, sitting in a pretended musing a while, at length he said. My honourable guests, it is now more then high time, that I should doe you such honour, as you have most justly deserved, by performing the promise made unto you. Then calling two of his servants, he sent them to Madame Catharina (whom he had caused to adorne her self in excellent manner) entreating her, that she would be pleased to grace his guests with her presence. Catharina, having deckt her child in costly habiliments, layed it in her armes, and came with the servants into the dyning Hall, and sate down (as the Knight had appointed) at the upper end of the Table, and then Signior Gentile spake thus. Behold, worthy Gentlemen, this is the Jewell which I have most affected, and intend to love none other in the world; be you my Judges, whether I have just occasion to doe so, or no? The Gentlemen saluting her with respective reverence, said to the Knight; that he had great reason to affect her: And viewing her advisedly, many of them thought her to be the very same woman (as indeed she was) but that they beleeved her to be dead.

But above all the rest, Nicoluccio Caccianimico could never be satisfied with beholding her; and, enflamed with earnest desire, to know what she was, could not refraine (seeing the Knight was gone out of the roome) but demaunded of her, whether she were of Bologna, or a stranger? when the Lady heard her selfe to be thus questioned, and by her Husband, it seemed painefull to her, to containe from answering: Neverthelesse, to perfect the Knights intended purpose, she sate silent. Others demaunded of her, whether the sweet Boy were hers, or no; and some questioned, if she were Gentiles Wife, or no, or else his Kinsewoman; to all which demaunds, she returned not any answere. But when the

Knight came to them againe, some of them said to him. Sir, this woman is a goodly creature, but she appeareth to be dumbe, which were great pitty, if it should be so. Gentlemen (quoth he) it is no small argument of her vertue, to sit still and silent at this instant. Tell us then (said they) of whence, and what she is. Therein (quoth he) I will quickely resolve you, upon your conditionall promise: that none of you do remove from his place, whatsoever shall be said or done, untill I have fully delivered my minde. Every one bound himselfe by solemne promise, to perform what he had appointed, and the Tables being voided, as also the Carpets laid; then the Knight (sitting downe by the Lady) thus began.

Worthy Gentlemen, this Lady is that true and faithfull servant, wherof I moved the question to you, whom I tooke out of the cold street, where her parents, kindred and friends (making no account at all of her) threw her forth, as a thing vile and unprofitable. Neverthelesse, such hath been my care and cost, that I have rescued her out of deaths griping power; and, in a meere charitable disposition, which honest affection caused me to beare her; of a body, full of terror and affrighting (as then she was) I have caused her to become thus lovely as you see. But because you may more apparantly discerne, in what manner this occasion happened; I will lay it open to you in more familiar manner. Then he began the whole history, from the originall of his unbeseeming affection to her (in regard she was a worthy mans wife) and consequently, how all had happened to the instant houre, to the no meane admiration of all the hearers, adding withall. Now Gentlemen (quoth he) if you varry not from your former opinion, and especially Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico: this Lady (by good right) is mine, and no man else, by any just title, can lay any claime to her.

All sate silent, without answering one word, as expecting what he intended further to say: but in the meane while, Nicoluccio, the parents and kindred, but chiefely the Lady her selfe, appeared as halfe melted into teares with weeping. But Signior Gentile, starting up from the Table, taking the Infant in his arme, and leading the Lady by the hand, going to Nicoluccio, thus spake. Rise Sir, I will not give thee thy wife, whom both her kindred and thine, threw forth into the street: but I will bestow this Lady on thee, being my Gossip, and this sweet Boy my God-sonne, who was (as I am verily perswaded) begotten by thee, I standing witnesse for him at the Font of Baptisme, and give him mine owne name Gentile. Let me entreat thee, that, although she hath lived here in mine house, for the space of three monethes, she should not be lesse welcome to thee, then before: for I sweare to thee upon my soule, that my former affection to her (how unjust soever) was the onely meanes of preserving her life: and more honestly she could not live, with Father, Mother, or thy selfe, then she hath done here with mine owne Mother.



Having thus spoken, he turned to the Lady, saying. Madame, I now discharge you of all promises made me, delivering you to your Husband franke and free: And when he had given him the Lady, and the child in his armes, he returned to his place, and sate downe againe. Nicoluccio, with no meane joy and hearty contentment received both his wife and childe, being before farre from expectation of such an admirable comfort; returning the Knight infinite thankes (as all the rest of the Company did the like) who could not refraine from weeping for meere joy, for such a strange and wonderful accident: every one highly commending Gentile, and such also as chanced to heare thereof. The Lady was welcommed home to her owne house, with many moneths of Joviall feasting, and as she passed through the streets, all beheld her with admiration, to be so happily recovered from her grave. Signior Gentile lived long after, a loyall friend to Nicoluccio and his Lady, and all that were well-willers to them.

What thinke you now Ladies? Can you imagine, because a King gave away his Crowne and Scepter; and an Abbot (without any cost to himselfe) reconciled a Malefactor to the Pope; and an old idle-headed man, yeelding to the mercy of his enemy: that all those actions are comparable to this of Signior Gentile? Youth and ardent affection, gave him a just and lawfull title, to her who was free (by imagined death) from Husband, Parents, and all friends else, she being so happily wonne into his owne possession. Yet honestly not onely overswayed the heate of desire, which in many men is violent and immoderate: but with a bountifull and liberall soule, that which he coveted beyond all hopes else, and had within his owne command; he freely gave away. Beleeve me (bright Beauties) not any of the other (in a true and unpartiall judgement) are worthy to be equalled with this, or stiled by the name of magnificent actions.

* * *

THE FIFT NOVELL

ADMONISHING ALL LADIES AND GENTLEWOMEN, THAT ARE DESIROUS TO PRESERVE THEIR CHASTITY, FREE FROM ALL BLEMISH AND TAXATION: TO MAKE NO PROMISE OF YEELDING TO ANY, UNDER A COMPACT OR COVENANT, HOW IMPOSSIBLE SOEVER IT MAY SEEME TO BE.

MADAME *Dianora, the Wife of Signior Gilberto, being immodestly affected by Signior Ansaldo, to free her selfe from his tedious importunity, she appointed him to performe (in her judgement) an act of impossibility; namely, to give her a Garden, as plentifully stored with fragrant Flowers in January, as in the flourishing moneth of May. Ansaldo, by meanes of a bond which he made to a Magitian, performed her request. Signior Gilberto, the Ladyes Husband, gave consent, that his Wife should fulfill her promise made to Ansaldo. Who hearing the bountifull mind of her Husband; released her of her promise: And the Magitian likewise discharged Signior Ansaldo, without taking any thing of him.*

NOT any one in all the Company, but extolled the worthy Act of Signior Gentile to the skies; till the King gave command to Madame Æmillia, that she should follow next with her Tale, who boldly stepping up, began in this order.

Gracious Ladies, I thinke there is none heere present among us, but (with good reason) may maintaine, that Signiour Gentile performed a magnificent deede; but whosoever saith, it is impossible to do more; perhaps is ignorant in such actions, as can and may be done, as I meane to make good unto you, by a Novell not overlong or tedious.

The Countrey of Fretulium, better knowne by the name of Forum Julij; although it be subject to much cold, yet it is pleasant, in regard of many goodly Mountaines, Rivers, and cleare running Springs, wherewith it is not meanly stored. Within those Territories, is a City called Udina, where sometime lived a faire and Noble Lady, named Madame Dianora, Wife to a rich and woorthie Knight, called Signior Gilberto, a man of very great fame and merite.

This beautiful Lady, beeing very modest and vertuously inclined, was highly affected by a Noble Baron of those parts, tearmed by the name of Signior Ansaldo Gradense; a man of very great spirit, bountifull, active in Armes, and yet very affable and courteous, which caused him to be the better respected. His love to this Lady was extraordinary, hardly to bee contained within any moderate compasse, striving to bee in like manner affected of her: to which end, she wanted no daily solicitings, Letters, Ambassages and Love-tokens, all proving to no purpose.

This vertuous Lady, being wearied with his often temptations, and seeing, that by denying whatsoever he demanded, yet he wold not give over his suite, but so much the more importunatly stil pursued her: began to bethinke her selfe, how she might best be rid of him, by imposing some such taske upon him, as should bee impossible (in her opinion) for him to effect. An olde woman, whom hee imployed for his continual messenger to her, as shee came one day about her ordinary errand, with her she communed in this manner. Good woman (quoth she) thou hast so often assured me, that Signior Ansaldo loveth me above all other Women in the world, offering me wonderfull gifts and presents in his name, which I have alwayes refused, and so stil wil do, in regard I am not to be woon by any such allurements: yet if I could be soundly perswaded, that his affection is answerable to thy peremptory protestations, I shoulde (perhaps) be the sooner wonne, to listen to his suite in milder manner, then hitherto I have done. Wherefore, if he wil give me assurance, to perform such a businesse as I mean to enjoyne him, he shall the speedier heare better answer from me, and I wil confirme it with mine oath.

Wonderfully pleased was Mistresse Maquerella, to heare a reply of such comfortable hope; and therefore desired the Lady, to tel hir what she wold have done. Listen to me wel (answerd Madam Dianora) the matter which I would have him to effect for me, is; without the wals of our City, and during the month of Januarie nexte ensuing, to provide me a Garden, as fairely furnished with all kind of fragrant flowers, as the flourishing month of May can yeelde no better. If he be not able to accomplish this imposition, then I command him, never hereafter to solicite me any more, either by thee, or any other whatsoever: for, if he do importune me afterward, as hitherto I have concealed his secret conspiring, both from my husband, and all my friends; so wil I then lay his dishonest suite open to the world, that he may receive punishment accordingly, for offering to wrong a Gentleman in his wife.

When Signior Ansaldo heard her demand, and the offer beside thereuppon made him (although it seemed no easie matter, but a thing meerly impossible to be done) he considered advisedly, that she made this motion to no other end, but onely to bereave him of all his hope, ever to enjoy what so earnestly hee desired: neverthelesse, he would not so give it utterly over, but would needs approve what could be done. Heereupon, hee sent into divers partes of the world, to find out any one that was able to advise him in this doubtfull case. In the end, one was brought to him, who beeing well recompenced for his paines, by the Art of Nigromancie would under take to do it. With him Signior Ansaldo covenanted, binding himselfe to pay a great summe of mony, upon performance of so rare a deed, awaiting (in hopefull expectation) for the month of Januaries comming.

It being come, and the weather then in extreamity of cold, every thing being covered with ice and snow, the Magitian prevailed so by his Art, that after the Christmas Holy dayes were past, and the Calends of January entred: in one night, and without the Cittie Wals, the goodliest Garden of flowers and fruites, was sodainely sprung up, as (in opinion of such as beheld it) never was the like seen before. Now Ladies, I think I need not demand the question, whether Signior Ansaldo were wel pleased, or no, who going to beholde it, saw it most plenteously stored, with al kind of fruit trees, flowers, herbes and plants, as no one could be named, that was wanting in this artificiall garden. And having gathered some pretty store of them, secretly he sent them to Madam Dianora, inviting hir to come see her Garden, perfected according to her owne desire, and uppon view thereof, to confesse the integrity of his love to her; considering and remembring withall, the promise shee had made him under solemne oath, that she might be reputed for a woman of her word.

When the Lady beheld the fruites and flowers, and heard many other thinges recounted, so wonderfully growing in the same Garden: she began to repent her rash promise made; yet notwithstanding her repentance, as Women are covetous to see all rarities; so, accompanied with divers Ladies and Gentlewomen more, she went to see the Garden; and having commended it with much admiration, she returned home againe, the most sorrowfull Woman as ever lived, considering what she had tyed her selfe to, for enjoying this Garden. So excessive grew her griefe and affliction, that it could not be so clouded or concealed: but her Husband tooke notice of it, and would needs understand the occasion thereof. Long the Lady (in regard of shame and modesty) sate without returning any answer; but being in the end constrained, she disclosd the whol History to him.

At the first, Signior Gilberto waxed exceeding angry, but when he further considered withall, the pure and honest intention of his Wife; wisely he pacified his former distemper, and saide. Dianora, it is not the part of a wise and honest woman, to lend an eare to ambassages of such immodest nature, much lesse to compound or make agreement for her honesty, with any person, under any condition whatsoever. Those perswasions which the heart listeneth to, by allurement of the eare, have greater power then many do imagine, and nothing is so uneasie or difficult, but in a lovers judgement it appeareth possible. Ill didst thou therefore first of all to listen, but worse (afterward) to contract.

But, because I know the purity of thy soule, I wil yeelde (to disoblige thee of thy promise) as perhaps no wise man else would do: mooved thereto onely by feare of the Magitian, who seeing Signior Ansaldo displeased, because thou makest a mockage of him; will do some such violent wrong to us, as we shal be never able to recover. Wherefore, I would have thee go to Signior Ansaldo, and if thou canst (by any meanes) obtaine of him, the safe-keeping of thy honour, and ful discharge of thy promise; it shal be an eternall fame to thee, and the crowne of a most victorious conquest. But if it must needs be otherwise, lend him thy body onely for once, but not thy wil: for actions committed by constraint, wherein the will is no way guilty, are halfe pardonable by the necessity.

Madame Dianora, hearing her husbands words, wept exceedingly, and avouched, that shee had not deserved any such especiall grace of him, and therefore she would rather dye, then doe it. Neverthelesse, it was the wil of her Husband to have it so, and therefore (against her wil) she gave consent. The next morning, by the breake of day, Dianora arose, and attiring her selfe in her very meanest garments, with two servingmen before her, and a waiting Woman following, she went to the lodging of Signior Ansaldo, who hearing that Madam Dianora was come to visite him, greatly mervailed, and being risen, he called the Magitian to him, saying. Come go with me, and see what effect will follow upon thine Art. And being come into her presence, without any base or inordinate appetite, he did her humble reverence, embracing her honestly, and taking her into a goodly Chamber, where a faire fire was readilie prepared, causing her to sit downe by him, he sayde unto her as followeth.

Madam, I humbly intreat you to resolve me, if the affection I have long time borne you, and yet do stil, deserve any recompence at all: you would be pleased then to tel me truly, the occasion of your instant comming hither, and thus attended as you are. Dianora, blushing with modest shame, and the teares trickling mainly down her faire cheekes, thus answered. Signior Ansaldo, not for any Love I beare you, or care of my faithfull promise made to you, but onely by the command of my husband (who respecting more the paynes and travels of your inordinate love, then his owne reputation and honor, or mine;) hath caused me to come hither: and by vertue of his command, am ready (for once onely) to fulfill your pleasure, but far from any will or consent in my selfe. If Signior Ansaldo were abashed at the first, hee began now to be more confounded with admiration, when he heard the Lady speake in such strange manner: and being much moved with the liberall command of her husband, he began to alter his inflamed heate, into most honourable respect and compassion, returning her this answer.

Most noble Lady, the Gods forbid (if it be so as you have sayd) that I should (Villain-like) soile the honour of him, that takes such unusuall compassion of my unchaste appetite. And therefore, you may remaine heere so long as you please, in no other condition, but as mine owne naturall borne Sister; and likewise, you may depart freely when you will: conditionally, that (on my behalfe) you render such thankes to your husband, as you thinke convenient for his great bounty towards me, accounting me for ever heereafter, as his loyall Brother and faithfull servant. Dianora having well observed his answer, her heart being ready to mount out at her mouth with joy, said. All the world could never make mee beleeve (considering your honourable minde and honesty) that it would happen otherwise to me, then now it hath done, for which noble courtesie, I will continually remaine obliged to you. So, taking her leave, she returned home honorably attended to her husband, and relating to him what had happened, it proved the occasion of begetting intire love and friendship, betweene himselfe and the Noble Lord Ansaldo.

Now concerning the skilfull Magitian, to whom Ansaldo meant to give the bountifull recompence agreed on betweene them, hee having seene the strange liberality, which the husband expressed to Signior Ansaldo, and that of Ansaldo to the Lady, hee presently saide. Great Jupiter strike me dead with thunder, having my selfe seene a husband so liberall of his honour, and you Sir of true noble kindnesse, if I should not be the like of my recompence: for, perceiving it to be so worthily imployed, I am well contented that you shal keepe it. The Noble Lord was modestly ashamed, and strove (so much as in him lay) that he should take all, or the greater part thereof: but seeing he laboured meerly in vaine, after the third day was past, and the Magitian had destroyed the Garden againe, hee gave him free liberty to depart, quite controlling all fond and unchaste affection in himselfe, either towards Dianora, or any Lady else, and living (ever after) as best becommeth any Nobleman to do.

What say you now Ladies? Shal wee make any account of the woman wel-neere dead, and the kindnesse growne cold in Signiour Gentile, by losse of his former hopes, comparing them with the liberality of Signior Ansaldo, affecting more fervently, then ever the other did? And being (beyond hope) possessed of the booty, which (above all things else in the world) he most desired to have, to part with it meerly in fond compassion? I protest (in my judgement) the one is no way comparable to the other; that of Gentile, with this last of Signior Ansaldo.

THE SIXT NOVELL

SUFFICIENTLY DECLARING, THAT HOW MIGHTY SOEVER THE POWER OF LOVE IS: YET A MAGNANIMOUS AND TRULY GENEROUS HEART, IT CAN BY NO MEANES FULLY CONQUER.

VICTORIOUS *King Charles, sirnamed the Aged, and first of that Name, fell in love with a yong Maiden, named Genevera, daughter to an ancient Knight, called Signior Neri degli Uberti. And waxing ashamed of his amorous folly, caused both Genevera, and her fayre Sister Isotta, to be joyned in marriage with two Noble Gentlemen; the one named Signior Maffeo da Palizzi, and the other, Signior Gulielmo della Magna.*

WHO is able to expresse ingeniously, the diversity of opinions, which hapned among the Ladies, in censuring on the act of Madame Dianora, and which of them was most liberall, either Signior Gilberto the Husband, Lord Ansaldo the importunate suiter, or the Magitian, expecting to bee bountifully rewarded. Surely, it is a matter beyond my capacity: but after the King had permitted their disputation a long while, looking on Madam Fiammetta, he commanded that she should report her Novel to make an end of their controversie; and she (without any further delaying) thus began. I did alwaies (Noble Ladies) hold it fit and decent, that in such an assembly as this of ours is, every one ought to speake so succinctly and plainly: that the obscure understanding, concerning the matters spoken of, should have no cause of disputation. For disputes do much better become the Colledges of Schollers, then to be among us, who hardly can manage our Distaves or Samplers. And therefore I, who intend to relate something, which (peradventure) might appeare doubtfull: will forbeare (seeing you in such a difference; for that which hath bin spoken alreadie) to use any difficult discourse; but will speake of one, a man of no meane ranke or quality, being both a valiant and vertuous King, and what he did, without any impeach or blemish to his honor.

I make no doubt, but you have often heard report, of king Charls the Aged, and first of that name, by reason of his magnificent enterprises, as also his most glorious victory, which he obtaind against King Manfred, when the Ghibellines were expulsed foorth of Florence, and the Guelphes returned thither againe. By which occasion, an ancient knight, named Signior Neri degli Uberti; forsaking then the City, with all his family and great store of wealth, woulde live under any other obedience, then the awful power or command of King Charles. And coveting to be in some solitary place, where he might finish the remainder of his dayes in peace, he went to Castello da Mare; where, about a Bow shoote distance from all other dwelling houses, hee bought a parcel of ground, plentifully stored with variety of Trees, bearing Olives, Chesnuts, Orenges, Lemons, Pomcitrons, and other excellent frutages, wherewith the Countrey flourisheth abundantly. There he built a very faire and commodious house, and planted (close by it) a pleasant Garden, in the middst whereof, because he had great plenty of water: according as other men use to do, being in the like case so wel provided; he made a very goodly Pond, which forthwith had all kinde of Fish swimming in it, it being his daily care and endevour, to tend his Garden, and encrease his Fish-pond.

It fortuned, that King Charles (in the Summer time) for his pleasure and recreation, went to repose himselfe (for some certayne dayes) at Castello de Mare, where having heard report of the beautie and singularitie of Signiour Neries Garden; hee grew very desirous to see it. But when he understoode to whome it belonged, then he entred into consideration with himselfe, that hee was an ancient Knight, maintaining a contrarie faction to his: wherefore, he thought it fit to goe in some familiar manner, and with no trayne attending on him. Wherupon he sent him word, that he wold come to visit him, with foure Gentlemen onely in his companie, meaning to sup with him in his Garden the next night ensuing. The newes was very welcome to Signior Neri, who took order in costly maner for all things to bee done, entertaining the King most joyfully into his beautifull Garden.

When the King had survayed all, and the house likewise, he commended it beyond all other comparison, and the Tables being placed by the Ponds side, he washed his hands therin, and then sat down at the table, commanding the Count, Sir Guy de Montforte (who was one of them which came in his company) to sitte downe by him, and Signior Neri on his other side. As for the other three of the traine, hee commaunded them to attend on his service, as Signior Neri had given order. There wanted no exquisite Viandes and excellent Wines, all performed in most decent manner, and without the least noise or disturbance, wherein the King tooke no little delight.

Feeding thus in this contented manner, and fancying the solitude of the place: sodainly entred into the garden, two yong Damosels, each aged about some fifteene yeares, their haire resembling wyars of Gold, and curiously curled, having Chaplets (made like provinciall Crownes) on their heades, and their delicate faces, expressing them to be rather Angels, then mortall creatures, such was the appearance of their admired beauty. Their under-garments were of costly Silke, yet white as the finest snow, framed (from the girdle upward) close to their bodies, but spreading largely downward, like the extendure of a Pavillion, and so descending to the feet. She that first came in sight, caried on her shoulder a couple of fishing Netts, which she held fast with her left hand, and in the right she carryed a long staffe. The other following her, had on her left shoulder a Frying-pan, and under the same arme a small Faggot of woodde, with a Trevit in her hand; and in the other hand a pot of Oyle, as also a brand of fire flaming.

No sooner did the King behold them, but he greatly wondered what they should be; and, without uttering one word, attended to listen what they wold say. Both the yong damosels, when they were come before the King, with modest and bashfull gesture, they performed very humble reverence to him, and going to the place of entrance into the Pond, she who held the Trevit, set it downe on the ground, with the other things also; and taking the staffe which the other Damosell carried: they both went into the Pond, the water whereof reached so high as to their bosomes. One of the Servants to Signior Neri, presently kindled the fire, setting the Trevit over it, and putting

Oyle into the Frying-panne, held it uppon the Trevit, awaiting untill the Damosels should cast him uppe Fish. One of them did beate a place with the staffe, where she was assured of the Fishes resort, and the other hadde lodged the Nets so conveniently, as they quickly caught great store of Fish, to the Kings high contentment, who observed their behaviour very respectively.

As the Fishes were throwne up to the servant, alive as they were, he tooke the best and fairest of them, and brought them to the Table, where they skipt and mounted before the King, Count Guy de Montfort and the Father: some leaping from the Table into the Pond againe, and others, the King (in a pleasing humour) voluntarily threw backe to the Damosels. Jesting and sporting in this manner, till the servant had drest divers of them in exquisite order, and served them to the Table, according as Signior Neri had ordained. When the Damosels saw the Fishes service performed, and perceived that they had fished sufficiently: they came forth of the water, their garments then (being wet) hanging close about them, even as if they hid no part of their bodies. Each having taken those things againe, which at first they brought with them, and saluting the king in like humility as they did before, returned home to the mansion house.

The King and Count likewise, as also the other attending Gentlemen, having duely considered the behavior of the Damosels: commended extraordinarily their beauty and faire feature, with those other perfections of Nature so gloriously shining in them. But (beyond all the rest) the King was boundlesse in his praises given of them, having observed their going into the water, the equall carriage there of them both, their comming forth, and gracious demeanor at their departing (yet neither knowing of whence, or what they were) he felt his affection very violently flamed, and grew into such an amourous desire to them both, not knowing which of them pleased him most, they so choisely resembled one another in all things.

But after he had dwelt long enough upon these thoughts, he turned him selfe to Signior Neri, and demanded of him, what Damosels they were. Sir (answered Neri) they are my Daughters, both brought into the world at one birth, and Twinnes, the one being named Genevera the faire, and the other Isotta the amiable. The King began againe to commend them both, and gave him advise to get them both married: wherein he excused himselfe, alleadging, that he wanted power to doe it. At the same time instant, no other service remaining to be brought to the table, except Fruit and Cheese, the two Damosels returned againe, attyred in goodly Roabes of Carnation Sattin, formed after the Turkish fashion, carrying two fayre Silver dishes in their hands, filled with divers delicate Fruites, such as the season then afforded, setting them on the Table before the King. Which being done, they retyred a little backeward, and with sweet melodious voyces, sung a ditty, beginning in this manner.

Where Love presumeth into place:
Let no one sing in Loves disgrace.

So sweet and pleasing seemed the Song to the King (who tooke no small delight, both to heare and behold the Damosels) even as if all the Hirarchies of Angels were descended from the Heavens to sing before him. No sooner was the Song ended, but (humbly on their knees) they craved favour of the King for their departing. Now, although their departure was greatly grieving to him, yet (in outward appearance) he seemed willing to grant it.

When Supper was concluded, and the King and his Company remounted on horsebacke: thankefully departing from Signior Neri, the King returned to his lodging, concealing there closely his affection to himselfe, and whatsoever important affaires happened: yet he could not forget the beauty, and gracious behaviour of Genevera the faire (for whose sake he loved her Sister likewise) but became so linked to her in vehement maner, as he had no power to think on any thing else. Pretending other urgent occasions, he fell into great familiarity with Signior Neri, visiting very often his goodly Garden; onely to see his faire Daughter Genevera, the Adamant which drew him thither.

When he felt his amourous assaults, to exceed all power of longer sufferance: he resolved determinately with himselfe, (being unprovided of any better meanes) to take her away from her Father, and not onely she, but her Sister also; discovering both his love and intent to Count Guy de Montforte, who being a very worthy and vertuous Lord, and meet to be a Counseller for a King, delivered his mind in this manner.

Gracious Lord, I wonder not a little at your speeches, and so much the greater is my admiration, because no man els can be subject to the like, in regard I have knowne you from the time of your infancy; even to this instant houre, and alwayes your carriage to bee one and the same. I could never perceive in your youthfull dayes (when love should have the greatest meanes to assaile you) any such oppressing passions: which is now the more novell and strange to me, to heare it but said, that you being old, and called the Aged; should be growne amorous, surely to me it seemeth a miracle. And if it appertained to me to reprehend you in this case, I know well enough what I could say. Considering, you have yet your Armour on your backe, in a Kingdome newly conquered, among a Nation not knowne to you, full of falsehoods, breaches, and treasons; all which are no meane motives to care and needfull respect. But having now wone a little leisure, to rest your selfe a while from such serious affaires; can you give way to the idle suggestions of Love? Beleeve me Sir, it is no act becomming a magnanimious King; but rather the giddy folly of a young braine.

Moreover you say (which most of all I mislike) that you intend to take the two Virgines from the Knight, who hath given you entertainment in his house beyond his ability, and to testifie how much he honoured you, he suffered you to have a sight of them, meerely (almost) in a naked manner: witnessing thereby, what constant faith he reposed in you, beleeving verily, that you were a just King, and not a ravenous Woolfe. Have you so soone forgot, that the rapes and violent actions, done by King Manfred to harmelesse Ladies, made your onely way of entrance into this Kingdome? What treason was ever committed, more worthy of eternall punishment, then this will be in you: to take away from him (who hath so highly honoured you) his chiefest hope and consolation? What will be said by all men, if you doe it?

Peradventure you thinke, it will be a sufficient excuse for you, to say: I did it, in regard hee was a Ghibelline. Can you imagine this to be justice in a King, that such as get into their possession in this manner (whatsoever it be) ought to use it in this sort? Let me tell you Sir, it was a most worthy victory for you, to conquer King Manfred: but it is farre more famous victory, for a man to conquer himselfe. You therfore, who are ordained to correct vices in other men, learne first to subdue them in your selfe, and (by brideling this inordinate appetite) set not a foule blemish on so faire a fame, as will be honour to you to preserve spotlesse.

These words pierced the heart of the King deepely, and so much the more afflicted him, because he knew them to be most true: wherefore, after he had ventred a very vehement sigh, thus he replyed. Beleeve me noble Count, there is not any enemy, how strong soever he be, but I hold him weake and easie to be vanquished, by him who is skilfull in the warre, where a man may learne to conquere his owne appetite. But because he shall find it a laborious taske, requiring inestimable strength and courage; your words have so toucht me to the quicke, that it becommeth me to let you effectually perceive (and within the compasse of few dayes) that as I have learned to conquer others, so I am not ignorant, in expressing the like power upon my selfe.

Having thus spoken, within some few dayes after, the King being returned to Naples, he determined, as well to free himself from any the like ensuing follie, as also to recompence Signior Neri, for the great kindnesse he had shewne to him (although it was a difficult thing, to let another enjoy, what he rather desired for himselfe) to have the two Damosels married, not as the Daughters of Signior Neri, but even as if they were his owne. And by consent of the Father, he gave Genevera the faire, to Signior Maffeo da Palizzi, and Isotta the amiable, to Signior Gulielmo della Magna, two Noble Knights and honourable Barons. After he had thus given them in marriage, in sad mourning he departed thence into Apuglia, where by following worthy and honourable actions, he so well overcame all inordinate appetites: that shaking off the enthralling fetters of love, he lived free from all passions, the rest of his life time, and dyed as an honourable King.

Some perhaps will say, it was a small matter for a King, to give away two Damosels in marriage, and I confesse it: but I maintaine it to be great, and more then great, if we say, that a King, being so earnestly enamoured as this King was; should give her away to another, whom he so dearely affected himselfe, without receiving (in recompence of his affection) so much as a leaffe, flowre, or the least fruit of love. Yet such was the vertue of this magnificent King, expressed in so highly recompencing the noble Knights courtesie, honouring the two daughters so royally, and conquering his owne affections so vertuously.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS COVERTLY GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND, THAT HOWSOEVER A PRINCE MAY MAKE USE OF HIS ABSOLUTE POWER AND AUTHORITY, TOWARDS MAIDES OR WIVES THAT ARE HIS SUBJECTS: YET HE OUGHT TO DENY AND REJECT ALL THINGS, AS SHALL MAKE HIM FORGETFULL OF HIMSELFE, AND HIS TRUE HONOUR.

LISANA, *the Daughter of a Florentine Apothecary, named Bernardo Puccino, being at Palermo, and seeing Piero, King of Aragon run at the Tilt; fell so affectionately enamored of him, that she languished in an extreame and long sickenesse. By her owne devise, and means of a Song, sung in the hearing of the King: he vouchsafed to visite her, and giving her a kisse, terming himselfe also to bee her Knight for ever after, hee honourably bestowed her in marriage on a young Gentleman, who was called Perdicano, and gave him liberall endowments with her.*

MADAME Fiametta being come to the end of her Novell, and the great magnificence of King Charles much commended (howbeit, some of the Company, affecting the Ghibelline faction, were otherwise minded) Madame Pampinea, by order given from the King, began in this manner.

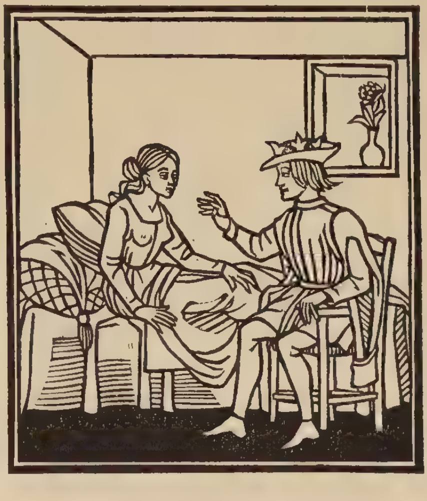
There is no man of good understanding (honourable Ladies) but will maintaine what you have said of victorious Charles; except such as cannot wish well to any. But because my memory hath instantly informed me, of an action (perhaps) no lesse commendable then this, done by an enemy of the said King Charles, and to a yong Maiden of our City, I am the more willing to relate it, upon your gentle attention vouchsafed, as hitherto it hath been courteously granted.

At such time as the French were driven out of Sicilie, there dwelt at Palermo a Florentine Apothecary, named Bernardo Puccino, a man of good wealth and reputation, who had by his Wife one onely Daughter, of marriageable yeares, and very beautifull. Piero, King of Arragon, being then become Lord of that Kingdom, he made an admirable Feast Royall at Palermo, accompanyed with his Lords and Barons. In honour of which publique Feast, the King kept a triumphall day (of Justs and Turnament) at Catalana, and whereat it chanced, that the Daughter of Bernardo, named Lisana, was present. Being in a window, accompanied with other Gentlewomen, she saw the King runne at the Tilt, who seemed so goodly a person in her eye; that being never satisfied with beholding him, she grew enamoured, and fell into extremity of affection towards him.

When the Feastivall was ended, she dwelling in the house of her Father, it was impossible for her to thinke on any thing else, but onely the love, which she had fixed on a person of such height. And that which most tormented her in this case, was the knowledge of her owne condition, being but meane and humble in degree; whereby she confessed, that she could not hope for any successefull issue of her proud love. Neverthelesse, she would not refraine from affecting the King, who taking no note of this kindnesse in her, by any perceivable meanes; must needs be the more regardles, which procured (by wary observation) her afflictions to be the greater and intollerable.

Whereon it came to passe, that this earnest love encreasing in her more and more, and one melancholly conceit taking hold on another: the faire Maide, when she could beare the burden of her griefe no longer; fell into a languishing sickenesse, consuming away daily (by evident appearance) even as the Snow melteth by the warme beames of the Sunne.

The Father and Mother, much dismayed and displeased at this haplesse accident, applying her with continuall comforts, Phisicke, and the best skill remayning in all the Phisitions, sought all possible meanes wayes to give her succour: but all proved to no effect, because in regard of her choyce (which could sort to none other then a desperate end) she was desirous to live no longer. Now it fortuned, that her parents offering her whatsoever remained in their power to performe, a sudden apprehension entred her minde, to wit, that (if it might possible be done) before she dyed, she would first have the King to know, in what manner she stood affected to him. Wherefore, one day she entreated her Father that a Gentleman, named Manutio de Arezza, might be permitted to come see her. This Manutio was (in those times) held to be a most excellent Musitian, both for his voyce in singing, and exquisite skill in playing on Instruments, for which he was highly in favour with King Piero, who made (almost) daily use of him, to heare him both sing and play.



Her tender and loving father conceived immediately, that shee was desirous to heare his playing and singing, both being comfortable to a body in a languishing sickenesse, whereupon, he sent presently for the Gentleman, who came accordingly, and after he had comforted Lisana with kind and courteous speeches; he played dexteriously on his Lute, which purposely hee had brought with him, and likewise he sung divers excellent Ditties, which insted of his intended consolation to the Maid, did nothing else but encrease her fire and flame.

Afterward, she requested to have some conference with Manutio alone, and every one being gone forth of the Chamber, she spake unto him in this manner.

Manutio, I have made choyce of thee, to be the faithfull Guardian of an especial secret, hoping first of al, that thou wilt never reveale it to any living body, but onely to him whom I shall bid thee: And next, to helpe me so much as possibly thou canst, because my onely hope relyeth in thee. Know then my dearest friend Manutio, that on the solemne festivall day, when our Soveraigne Lord the King honoured his exaltation, with the noble exercises of Tilt and Turney; his brave behaviour kindled such a sparke in my soule, as since brake forth into a violent flame, and brought me to this weake condition as now thou seest. But knowing and confessing, how farre unbeseeming my love is, to aime so ambitiously at a King, and being unable to controule it, or in the least manner to diminish it: I have made choyce of the onely and best remedy of all, namely, to dye, and so I am most willing to doe.

True it is, that I shall travaile in this my latest journey, with endlesse torment and affliction of soule, except he have some understanding thereof before, and not knowing by whom to give him intelligence, in so oft and convenient order, as by thee: I doe therefore commit this last office of a friend to thy trust, desiring thee, not to refuse me in the performance thereof. And when thou hast done it, to let me understand what he saith, that I may dye the more contentedly, and disburdened of so heavy an oppression, the onely comfort to a parting spirit: and so she ceased, her teares flowing forth abundantly.

Manutio did not a little wonder at the Maides great spirit, and her desperate resolution, which moved him to exceeding commiseration, and suddenly he conceived, that honestly he might discharge this duty for her, whereupon, he returned her this answer. Lisana, here I engage my faith to thee, that thou shalt find me firme and constant, and die I will, rather then deceive thee. Greatly I doe commend thy high attempt, in fixing thy affection on so Potent a King, wherein I offer thee my utmost assistance: and I make no doubt (if thou wouldest be of good comfort) to deale in such sort, as, before three dayes are fully past, to bring such newes as will content thee, and because I am loath to loose the least time, I will goe about it presently. Lisana the yong Maiden, once againe entreated his care and diligence, promising to comfort her selfe so well as she could, commending him to his good fortune. When Manutio was gone from her, hee went to a Gentleman, named Mico de Sienna, one of the best Poets in the composing of verses, as all those parts yeelded not the like. At his request, Mico made for him this ensuing Dittie.

THE SONG

SUNG IN THE HEARING OF KING PIERO, ON THE BEHALFE OF LOVE-SICKE LISANA

Goe Love, and tell the torments I endure,
Say to my Soveraigne Lord, that I must die
Except he come, some comfort to procure,
For tell I may not, what I feele, and why.

With heaved hands Great Love, I call to thee,
Goe see my Soveraigne, where he doth abide,

And say to him, in what extremity,
Thou hast (for him) my firm affection tryed.
To die for him, it is my sole desire,
For live with him I may not, nor aspire,
To have my fortunes thereby dignified,
Onely his sight would lend me life a while:
Grant it (great love) mine anguish to beguile.
Goe love, and tell the torments, etc.

Since the first houre that love enthralled me,
I never had the heart, to tell my griefe,
My thoughts did speake, for thoughts be alwayes free,
Yet hopefull thoughts doe find but poore reliefe.
When Gnats will mount to Eagles in the ayre,
Alas! they scorne them, for full well they know,
They were not bred to prey so base and low,
Aloft they look, to make their flight more faire.
And yet his sight would lend me life a while:
Grant it (great love) mine anguish to beguile.
Goe love, and tell the torments, etc.

If sight shall be denyed, then tell them plaine,
His high triumphall day procurd my death,
The Launce that won him Honour, hath me slaine,
For instantly it did bereave my breath.
That speake I could not, nor durst be so bold,
To make the Ayre acquainted with my woe:
Alas! I lookt so high, and doing so,
Justly deserve by death to be controld.
Yet mercies sight would lend me life a while,
Grant it (great love) mine anguish to beguile.

Goe love, and tell the torments I endure,
Say to my Soveraigne Lord, that I must die:
Except he come, some comfort to procure,
For tell I may not, what I feele, and why.

The lines contained in this Ditty, Manutio fitted with noates so mooving and singularly musicall, that every word had the sensible motion of life in it, where the King being (as yet) not risen from the Table, he commanded him to use both his Lute and voyce.

This seemed a happy opportunity to Manutio, to sing the dittie so purposely done and devised: which hee delivered in such excellent manner, the voice and Instrument concording so extraordinary pleasing; that all the persons then in the Presence, seemed rather Statues, then living men, so strangely they were wrapt with admiration, and the King himselfe farre beyond all the rest, transported with a rare kinde of alteration.

When Manutio had ended the Song, the King demanded of him, whence this Song came, because he had never heard it before? My gracious Lord, answered Manutio, it must needes seeme straunge to your Majesty, because it is not fully three dayes, since it was invented, made, and set to the note. Then the King asked, whom it concerned? Sir (quoth Manutio) I dare not disclose that to any but onely your selfe. Which answer made the King much more desirous, and being risen from the Table, he tooke him into his Bedchamber, where Manutio related all at large to him, according to the trust reposed in him. Wherwith the King was wonderfully well pleased, greatly commending the courage of the Maide, and said, that a Virgin of such a valiant spirit, did well deserve to have her case commiserated: and commanded him also, to goe (as sent from him) and comfort her, with promise, that the very same day, in the evening, he would not faile to come and see her.

Manutio, more then contented, to carry such glad tydings to Lisana; without staying in any place, and taking his Lute also with him, went to the Apothecaries house, where speaking alone with the Maide: he told her what he had done, and afterward sung the song to her, in as excellent manner as he had done before, wherein Lisana conceived such joy and contentment, as even in the very same moment, it was observed by apparant signes, that the violence of her fits forsooke her, and health began to get the upper hand of them. So, without suffering any one in the house to know it, or by the least meanes to suspect it; she comforted her selfe till the evening, in expectation of her Soveraignes arrivall.

Piero being a Prince, of most liberall and benigne nature, having afterward divers times considered on the matters which Manutio had revealed to him, knowing also the yong Maiden, to bee both beautifull and vertuous: was so much moved with pitty of her extremitie, as mounting on horsebacke in the evening, and seeming as if he rode abroad for his private recreation; he went directly to the Apothecaries house, where desiring to see a goodly garden, appertaining then to the Apothecarie, he dismounted from his horse. Walking into the garden, he began to question with Bernardo, demaunding him for his Daughter, and whether he had (as yet) marryed her, or no? My Gracious Lord, answered Bernardo, as yet shee is not marryed, neither likely to bee, in regard shee hath had a long and tedious sickenesse: but since Dinner time, she is indifferently eased of her former violent paine, which we could not discerne the like alteration in her, a long while before.

The King understood immediately, the reason of this so sudden alteration, and said. In good faith Bernardo, the world would sustaine a great maine and imperfection, by the losse of thy faire daughter; wherefore, we will goe our selfe in person to visite her. So, with two of his Lords onely, and the Father, he ascended to the Maides Chamber and being entred, he went to the Beds side, where she sate, somewhat raised, in expectation of his comming, and taking her by the hand, he said. Faire Lisana, how commeth this to passe? You being so faire a Virgin, yong, and in the delicacy of your daies, which should be the chiefest comfort to you, will you suffer your selfe to be over-awed with sickenesse? Let us intreat you, that (for our sake) you will be of good comfort, and thereby recover your health the sooner, especially, when it is requested by a King, who is sorry to see so bright a beauty sicke, and would helpe it, if it consisted in his power.

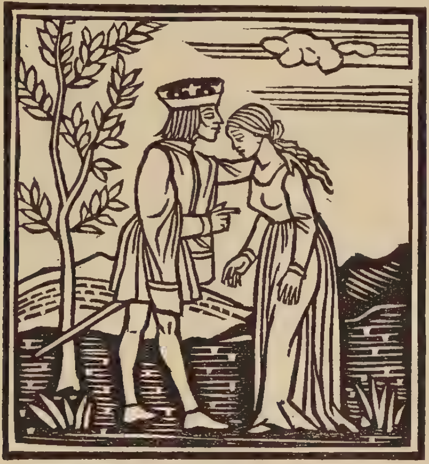
Lisana, feeling the touch of his hand, whom she loved above all things else in the world, although a bashfull blush mounted up into her cheekes: yet her heart was seazed with such a rapture of pleasure, that she thought her selfe translated into Paradise, and, so well as she could, thus she replyed. Great King, by opposing my feeble strength, against a burden of over-ponderous weight, it became the occasion of this grievous sickenesse: but I hope that the violence thereof is (almost) already kild, onely by this soveraigne mercy in you, and doubtlesse it will cause my speedy deliverance. The King did best understand this so well palliated answere of Lisana, which as he did much commend, in regard of her high adventuring; so he did againe as greatly condemne Fortune, for not making her more happy in her birth.

So, after he had stayed there a good while, and given her many comfortable speeches, he returned backe to the Court. This humanity in the King, was reputed a great honour to the Apothecary and his daughter, who (in her owne mind) received as much joy and contentment thereby, as ever any wife could have of her owne Husband.

And being assisted by better hopes, within a short while after, she became recovered, and farre more beautifull (in common judgment) then ever she was before.

Lisana being now in perfect health, the King consulted with his Queene, what meete recompence he should gratifie her withall, for loving and affecting him in such fervent manner. Upon a day determined, the King mounting on horsebacke, accompanied with many of his cheefest Lords and Barons, he rode to the Apothecaries house, where walking in his beautifull Garden, hee called for Bernardo and his daughter Lisana. In the meane space, the Queene also came thither, Royally attended on by her Ladies, and Lisana being admitted into their company, they expressed themselves very gracious to her. Soone after, the King and the Queene cald Lisana, and the King spake in this manner to her.

Faire Virgin, the extraordinary love which you bare to us, calleth for as great honour from us to you; in which respect, it is our Royall desire, by one meanes or other to requite your kinde Love. In our opinion, the chief honour we can extend to you, is, that being of sufficient yeares for marriage, you would grace us so much, as to accept him for your Husband, whom we intend to bestow on you. Beside this further grant from us, that (notwithstanding whatsoever else) you shall call us your Knight; without coveting any thing else from you, for so great favour, but only one kisse, and thinke not to bestow it nicely on a King, but grant it the rather, because he begges it.



Lisana, whose lookes were dyed with a vermillian tincture, or rather converted into a pure maiden blush, reputing the Kings desire to be her owne; in a low and humbled voyce, thus answered. My Lord, most certaine am I, that if it had beene publikely knowne, how none but your highnes, might serve for me to fixe my love on, I should have been termed the foole of all fooles: they perhaps beleeving, that I was forgetfull of my selfe, in being ignorant of mine owne condition, and much lesse of yours. But the Gods are my witnesses (because they know the secrets of all hearts) that even in the very instant, when Loves fire tooke hold on my yeelding affection: I knew you to be a King, and my selfe the daughter of poore Bernardo the Apothecary: likewise, how farre unfitting it was for me, to be so ambitious in my loves presuming. But I am sure your Majestie doth know (much better then I am able to expresse) that no one becommeth amourous, according to the duty of election, but as the appetite shapeth his course, against whose lawes my strength made many resistances, which not prevailing, I presumed to love, did, and so for ever shall doe, your Majestie.

Now Royall Soveraigne, I must needes confesse, that so soone as I felt my selfe thus wholly conquered by loving you, I resolved for ever after, to make your will mine owne, and therefore, am not onely willing to accept him for my Husband, whom you shall please to appoint, befitting my honor and degree: but if you will have me to live in a flaming fire, my obedience shall sacrifice it selfe to your will, with the absolute conformity of mine owne. To stile you by the name of my Knight, whom I know to be my lawfull King and Soveraigne; you are not ignorant, how farre unfitting a word that were for me to use: As also the kisse which you request, in requitall of my love to you; to these two I will never give consent, without the Queenes most gracious favour and license first granted. Neverthelesse, for such admirable benignity used to me, both by your Royall selfe, and your vertuous Queene: heaven shower downe all boundlesse graces on you both, for it exceedeth all merit in me, and so she ceased speaking, in most dutifull manner.

The answer of Lisana pleased the Queene exceedingly, in finding her to be so wise and faire, as the King himselfe had before informed her: who instantly called for her Father and Mother, and knowing they would be well pleased with whatsoever he did; he called for a proper yong Gentleman, but somewhat poore, being named Perdicano, and putting certaine Rings into his hand, which he refused not to receive, caused him there to espouse Lisana. To whome the King gave immediately (besides Chaines and Jewels of inestimable valew, delivered by the Queene to the Bride) Ceffala and Calatabelotta, two great territories abounding in divers wealthy possessions, saying to Perdicano. These wee give thee, as a dowry in marriage with this beautifull Maid, and greater gifts we will bestow on thee hereafter, as we shal perceive thy love and kindnesse to her.

When he had ended these words, hee turned to Lisana, saying: Heere doe I freely give over all further fruits of your affection towards me, thanking you for your former love: so taking her head betweene his hands, he kissed her faire forhead, which was the usuall custome in those times. Perdicano, the Father and Mother of Lisana, and she her selfe likewise, extraordinarily joyfull for this so fortunate a marriage, returned humble and hearty thankes both to the King and Queene, and (as many credible Authors doe affirme) the King kept his promise made to Lisana, because (so long as he lived) he alwaies termed himselfe by the name of her Knight, and in al actions of Chivalry by him undertaken, he never carried any other devise, but such as he received still from her.

By this, and divers other like worthy deeds, not onely did he win the hearts of his subjects; but gave occasion to the whole world beside, to renowne his fame to all succeeding posterity. Whereto (in these more wretched times of ours) few or none bend the sway of their understanding: but rather how to bee cruell and tyrranous Lords, and thereby win the hatred of their people.

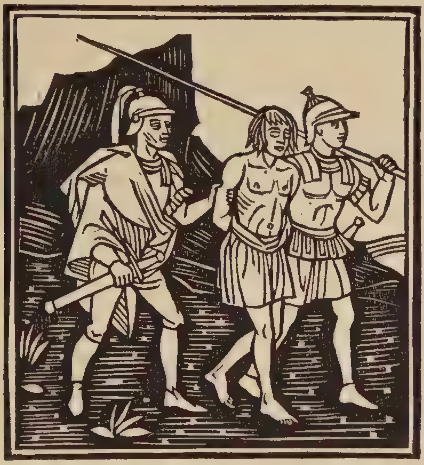
THE EIGHT NOVELL

DECLARING, THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE FROWNES OF FORTUNE, DIVERSITY OF OCCURRENCES, AND CONTRARY ACCIDENTS HAPPENING: YET LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP OUGHT TO BE PRECIOUSLY PRESERVED AMONG MEN.

SOPHRONIA, *thinking her selfe to be the maried wife of Gisippus, was (indeed) the wife of Titus Quintus Fulvius, and departed thence with him to Rome. Within a while after, Gisippus also came thither in very poore condition, and thinking that he was despised by Titus, grew weary of his life, and confessed that he had murdred a man, with ful intent to die for the fact. But Titus taking knowledge of him, and desiring to save the life of Gisippus, charged himself to have done the bloody deed. Which the murderer himself (standing then among the multitude) seeing, truly confessed the deed. By meanes whereof, all three were delivered by the Emperor Octavius; and Titus gave his Sister in mariage to Gisippus, giving them also the most part of his goods and inheritances.*

By this time Madam Philomena, at command of the King, (Madam Pampinea ceasing) prepared to follow next in order, whereupon thus she began. What is it (Gracious Ladies) that Kings cannot do (if they list) in matters of greatest importance, and especially unto such as most they should declare their magnificence? He then that performeth what he ought to do, when it is within his owne power, doth well. But it is not so much to bee admired, neither deserveth halfe the commendations, as when one man doth good to another, when least it is expected, as being out of his power, and yet performed. In which respect, because you have so extolled king Piero, as appearing not meanly meritorious in your judgements; I make no doubt but you will be much more pleased, when the actions of our equals are duly considered, and shal paralell any of the greatest Kings. Wherefore I purpose to tell you a Novel, concerning an honorable curtesie of two worthy friends.

At such time as Octavius Cæsar (not as yet named Augustus, but only in the office called Triumveri) governed the Romane Empire, there dwelt in Rome a Gentleman, named Publius Quintus Fulvius, a man of singular understanding, who having one son, called Titus Quintus Fulvius, of towardly yeares and apprehension, sent him to Athens to learne Philosophy, but with letters of familiar commendations, to a Noble Athenian Gentleman, named Chremes, being his ancient friend, of long acquaintance. This Gentleman lodged Titus in his owne house, as companion to his son, named Gisippus, both of them studying together, under the tutoring of a Philosopher, called Aristippus. These two yong Gentlemen living thus in one Citty, House, and Schoole, it bred betweene them such a brother-hoode and amity, as they could not be severed from one another, but only by the accident of death; nor could either of them enjoy any content, but when they were both together in company.



Being each of them endued with gentle spirits, and having begun their studies together: they arose (by degrees) to the glorious height of Philosophy, to their much admired fame and commendation. In this manner they lived, to the no meane comfort of Chremes, hardly distinguishing the one from the other for his Son, and thus the Schollers continued the space of three yeares. At the ending wherof (as it hapneth in al things else) Chremes died, whereat both the young Gentlemen conceived such hearty griefe, as if he had bin their common father; nor could the kinred of Chremes discerne, which of the two had most need of comfort, the losse touched them so equally.

It chanced within some few months after, that the kinred of Gisippus came to see him, and (before Titus) avised him to marriage, and with a yong Gentlewoman of singular beauty, derived from a most noble house in Athens, and she named Sophronia, aged about fifteen years. This mariage drawing neere, Gisippus on a day, intreated Titus to walk along with him thither, because (as yet) he had not seene her. Comming to the house, and she sitting in the midst betweene them, Titus making himselfe a considerator of beauty, and especially on his friends behalfe; began to observe her very judicially, and every part of her seemed so pleasing in his eie, that giving them al a privat praise, yet answerable to their due deserving; he becam so enflamed with affection to her, as never any lover could bee more violentlie surprized, so sodainly doth beauty beguile our best senses.

After they had sate an indifferent while with her, they returned home to their lodging, where Titus being alone in his chamber, began to bethink himselfe on her, whose perfections had so powerfully pleased him: and the more he entred into this consideration, the fiercer he felt his desires enflamed, which being unable to quench, by any reasonable perswasions, after hee had vented foorth infinite sighes, thus he questioned with himselfe.

Most unhappie Titus as thou art, whether doost thou transport thine understanding, love, and hope? Dooest thou not know as well by the honourable favours, which thou hast received of Chremes and his house, as also the intire amity betweene thee and Gisippus (unto whom faire Sophronia is the affianced friend) that thou shouldst holde her in the like reverent respect, as if shee were thy true borne Sister? Darest thou presume to fancie her? Whether shall beguiling Love allure thee, and vaine immaging hopes carrie thee? Open the eyes of thy better understanding, and acknowledge thy selfe to bee a most miserable man. Give way to reason, bridle thine intemperate appetites, reforme all irregulare desires, and guide thy fancy to a place of better direction. Resist thy wanton and lascivious will in the beginning, and be master of thy selfe, while thou hast opportunity, for that which thou aimest at, is neyther reasonable nor honest. And if thou wert assured to prevaile upon this pursuite, yet thou oughtst to avoide it, if thou hast any regard of true friendship, and the duty therein justly required. What wilt thou do then Titus? Fly from this inordinate affection, if thou wilt be reputed to be a man of sensible judgement.

After he had thus discoursed with himselfe, remembring Sophronia, and converting his former allegations, into a quite contrarie sense, in utter detestation of them, and guided by his idle appetite, thus he began againe. The lawes of love are of greater force, then any other whatsoever, they not only breake the bands of friendship, but even those also of more divine consequence. How many times hath it bin noted, the father to affect his own daughter, the brother his sister, and the stepmother her son in law, matters far more monstrous, then to see one friend love the wife of another, a case happening continually? Moreover, I am yong, and youth is wholly subjected to the passions of Love: is it reasonable then, that those should be bard from me, which are fitting and pleasing to Love? Honest things, belong to men of more years and maturity, then I am troubled withall, and I can covet none, but onely those wherein Love is directer. The beauty of Sophronia is worthy of generall love, and if I that am a yongman do love her, what man living can justly reprove me for it? Shold not I love her, because she is affianced to Gisippus? That is no matter to me, I ought to love her, because she is a woman, and women were created for no other occasion, but to bee Loved. Fortune had sinned in this case, and not I, in directing my frends affection to her, rather then any other; and if she ought to be loved, as her perfections do challenge, Gisippus understanding that I affect her, may be the better contented that it is I, rather then any other.

With these, and the like crosse entercourses, he often mockt himselfe, falling into the contrary, and then to this againe, and from the contrary, into another kind of alteration, wasting and consuming himselfe, not only this day and the night following, but many more afterward, til he lost both his feeding and sleepe, so that through debility of body, he was constrained to keepe his bed. Gisippus, who had divers dayes noted his melancholly disposition, and now his falling into extreamitie of sicknesse, was very sorry to behold it: and with all meanes and inventions he could devise to use, hee both questioned the cause of this straunge alteration, and essayed everie way, how hee might best comfort him, never ceassing to demaunde a reason, why he should become thus sad and sickely. But Titus after infinite importuning (which still he answered) with idle and frivolous excuses, farre from the truth indeede, and (to the no meane affliction of his friend) when he was able to use no more contradictions; at length, in sighes and teares, thus he replyed.

Gisippus, were the Gods so wel pleased, I could more gladly yeild to dye, then continue any longer in this wretched life, considering, that Fortune hath brought mee to such an extremity, as proofe is now to be made of my constancie and vertue; both which I finde conquered in me, to my eternall confusion and shame. But my best hope is, that I shal shortly be requited, as I have in justice deserved, namely with death, which will be a thousand times more welcome to me, then a loathed life, with remembrance of my base dejection in courage, which because I can no longer conceale from thee; not without blushing shame, I am well contented for to let thee know it.

Then began hee to recount, the whole occasion of this straunge conflict in him, what a maine battaile hee had with his private thoughts, confessing that they got the victory, causing him to die hourely for the love of Sophronia, and affirming withall, that in due acknowledgement, how greatly hee had transgressed against the lawes of friendship, he thought no other penance sufficient for him, but onely death, which he willingly expected every houre, and with all his heart would gladly bid welcome.

Gisippus hearing this discourse, and seeing how Titus bitterly wept, in agonies of most moving afflictions: sat an indifferent while sad and pensive, as being wounded with affection to Sophronia, but yet in a well-governed and temperate manner. So, without any long delaying, hee concluded with himselfe; that the life of his friend ought to be accounted much more deare, then any love hee could beare unto Sophronia: And in this resolution, the teares of Titus forcing his eyes to flow forth like two Fountaines, thus he replyed.

Titus, if thou hadst not neede of comfort, as plainly I see thou hast, I would justly complaine of thee to my selfe, as of the man who hath violated our friendship, in keeping thine extreamitie so long time concealed from mee, which hath beene overtedious for thee to endure. And although it might seeme to thee a dishonest case, and therefore kept from the knowledge of thy friend, yet I plainly tell thee, that dishonest courses (in the league of amitie) deserve no more concealment, then those of the honestest nature. But leaving these impertinent wandrings, let us come to them of much greater necessitie.

If thou doest earnestly love faire Sophronia, who is betroathed and affianced to me, it is no matter for me to marvaile at: but I should rather be much abashed, if thou couldst not intyrely affect her, knowing how beautifull she is, and the nobility of her minde, being as able to sustaine passion, as the thing pleasing is fullest of excellence. And looke how reasonable thou fanciest Sophronia, as unjustly thou complainest of thy fortune, in ordaining her to be my wife, although thou doest not speake it expresly: as being of opinion, that thou mightst with more honesty love her, if she were any others, then mine. But if thou art so wise, as I have alwayes held thee to be, tell me truely upon thy faith, to whom could Fortune better guide her, and for which thou oughtest to be more thankfull, then in bestowing her on me? Any other that had enjoyed her, although thy love were never so honest, yet he would better affect her himselfe, then for thee, which thou canst not (in like manner) looke for from me, if thou doest account me for thy friend, and as constant now as ever.

Reason is my warrant in this case, because I cannot remember, since first our entrance into friendship, that ever I enjoyed any thing, but it was as much thine, as mine. And if our affaires had such an equall course before, as otherwise they could not subsist; must they not now be kept in the same manner? Can any thing more perticularly appertaine to me, but thy right therein is as absolute as mine? I know not how thou maist esteeme of my friendship, if in any thing concerning my selfe, I can plead my priviledge to be above thine. True it is, that Sophronia is affianced to me, and I love her dearely, daily expecting when our nuptials shall be celebrated. But seeing thou doest more fervently affect her, as being better able to judge of the perfections, remaining in so excellent a creature as she is, then I doe: assure thy selfe, and beleeve it constantly, that she shall come to my bed, not as my wife, but onely thine. And therefore leave these despairing thoughts, shake off this cloudy disposition, reassume thy former Joviall spirit, with comfort and what else can content thee: in expectation of the happy houre, and the just requitall of thy long, loving, and worthy friendship, which I have alwayes valued equall with mine owne life.

Titus hearing this answer of Gisippus, looke how much the sweet hope of that which he desired gave him pleasure, as much both duty and reason affronted him with shame; setting before his eyes this du consideration, that the greater the liberality of Gisippus was, farre greater and unreasonable it appeared to him in disgrace, if hee should unmannerly accept it. Wherefore, being unable to refrain from teares, and with such strength as his weaknesse would give leave, thus he replyed.

Gisippus, thy bounty and firme friendship suffereth me to see apparantly, what (on my part) is no more then ought to be done. All the Gods forbid, that I should receive as mine, her whom they have adjudged to be thine, by true respect of birth and desert. For if they had thought her a wife fit for me, doe not thou or any else imagine, that ever she should have beene granted to thee. Use freely therefore thine owne election, and the gracious favour wherewith they have blessed thee: leave me to consume away in teares, a mourning garment by them appointed for me, as being a man unworthy of such happinesse; for either I shall conquer this disaster, and that wil be my crowne, or else will vanquish me, and free me from all paine: whereto Gisippus presently thus answered.

Worthy Titus, if our amity would give me so much licence, as but to contend with my selfe, in pleasing thee with such a thing as I desire, and could also induce thee therein to be directed: it is the onely end whereat I aime, and am resolved to pursue it. In which regard, let my perswasions prevaile with thee, and thereto I conjure thee, by the faith of a friend, suffer me to use mine authority, when it extendeth both to mine owne honour, and thy good, for I will have Sophronia to bee onely thine. I know sufficiently, how farre the forces of love doe extend in power, and am not ignorant also, how not once or twice, but very many times, they have brought lovers to unfortunate ends, as now I see thee very neere it, and so farre gone, as thou art not able to turne backe againe, nor yet to conquer thine owne teares, but proceeding on further in this extremity, thou wilt be left vanquished, sinking under the burthen of loves tyrannicall oppression, and then my turne is next to follow thee. And therefore, had I no other reason to love thee, yet because thy life is deare to me, in regard of mine owne depending thereon; I stand the neerer thereto obliged. For this cause, Sophronia must and shal be thine, for thou canst not find any other so conforme to thy fancy: albeit I who can easily convert my liking to another wife, but never to have the like friend againe, shall hereby content both thee, and my selfe.

Yet perhaps this is not a matter so easily done, or I to expresse such liberality therein, if wives were to be found with the like difficultie, as true and faithfull friends are: but, (being able to recover another wife) though never such a worthy friend; I rather chuse to change, I doe not say loose her (for in giving her to thee, I loose her not my selfe) and by this change, make that which was good before, tenne times better, and so preserve both thee and my selfe. To this end therefore, if my prayers and perswasions have any power with thee, I earnestly entreat thee, that, by freeing thy selfe out of this affliction, thou wilt (in one instant) make us both truely comforted, and dispose thy selfe (living in hope) to embrace that happinesse, which the fervent love thou bearest to Sophronia, hath justly deserved.

Now although Titus was confounded with shame, to yeeld consent, that Sophronia should be accepted as his wife, and used many obstinate resistances: yet notwithstanding, Love pleading on the one side powerfully, and Gisippus as earnestly perswading on the other, thus he answered. Gisippus, I know not what to say, neither how to behave my selfe in this election, concerning the fitting of mine contentment, or pleasing thee in thy importunate perswasion. But seeing thy liberality is so great, as it surmounteth all reason or shame in me, I will yeeld obedience to thy more then noble nature. Yet let this remaine for thine assurance, that I doe not receive this grace of thine, as a man not sufficiently understanding, how I enjoy from thee, not onely her whom most of all I doe affect, but also doe hold my very life of thee. Grant then you greatest Gods (if you be the Patrones of this mine unexpected felicitie) that with honor and due respect, I may hereafter make apparantly knowne: how highly I acknowledge this thy wonderfull favour, in being more mercifull to me, then I could be to my selfe.

For abridging of all further circumstances, answered Gisippus, and for easier bringing this matter to full effect, I hold this to be our onely way. It is not unknowne to thee, how after much discourse had between my kindred, and those belonging to Sophronia, the matrimoniall conjunction was fully agreed on, and therefore, if now I shall flye off, and say, I will not accept thee as my wife: great scandall would arise thereby, and make much trouble among our friends, which could not be greatly displeasing to me, if that were the way to make her thine. But I rather stand in feare, that if I forsake her in such peremptory sort, her kinred and friends will bestow her on some other, and so she is utterly lost, without all possible meanes of recovery. For prevention therefore of all sinister accidents, I thinke it best, (if thy opinion jumpe with mine) that I still pursue the busines, as already I have begun, having thee alwaies in my company, as my dearest friend and onely associate. The nuptials being performed with our friends, in secret manner at night (as we can cunningly enough contrive it) thou shalt have her maiden honour in bed, even as if she were thine owne wife. Afterward, in apt time and place, we will publiquely make knowne what is done; if they take it well, we will be as jocond as they: if they frowne and waxe offended, the deed is done, over-late to be recalled, and so perforce they must rest contented.

You may well imagine, this advise was not a little pleasing to Titus, wherupon Gisippus received home Sophronia into his house, with publike intention to make her his wife, according as was the custome then observed, and Titus being perfectly recovered, was present at the Feast very ceremonially observed. When night was come, the Ladies and Gentlewomen conducted Sophronia to the Bride-Chamber, where they left her in her Husbands bed, and then departed all away. The Chamber wherein Titus used to lodge, joyned close to that of Gisippus, for their easier accesse each to the other, at all times whensoever they pleased, and Gisippus being alone in the Bride-Chamber, preparing as if he were comming to bed: extinguishing the light, he went softly to Titus, willing him to goe to bed to his wife. Which Titus hearing, overcome with shame and feare, became repentant, and denyed to goe. But Gisippus, being a true intyre friend indeed, and confirming his words with actions: after a little lingring dispute, sent him to the Bride, and so soone as he was in the bed with her, taking Sophronia gently by the hand, softly he moved the usuall question to her, namely, if she were willing to be his wife.

She beleeving verily that he was Gisippus, modestly answered. Sir, I have chosen you to be my Husband, reason requires then, that I should be willing to be your wife. At which words, a costly Ring, which Gisippus used daily to weare, he put upon her finger, saying. With this Ring, I confesse my selfe to be your Husband, and bind you (for ever) my Spouse and Wife; no other kind of marriage was observed in those dayes, and so he continued all the night with her, she never suspecting him to be any other then Gisippus, and thus was the marriage consumated, betweene Titus and Sophronia, albeit the friends (on either side) thought otherwise.

By this time, Publius, the father of Titus, was departed out of this mortall life, and letters came to Athens, that with all speed he should returne to Rome, to take order for occasions there concerning him; wherefore he concluded with Gisippus about his departure, and taking Sophronia thither with him, which was no easie matter to be done, until it were first known, how occasions had bin caried among them. Wherupon, calling her one day into her Chamber, they told her entirely, how all had past, which Titus confirmed substantially, by such direct passages betweene themselves, as exceeded all possibility of denyall, and moved in her much admiration; looking each on other very discontentedly, she heavily weeping and lamenting, and greatly complaining of Gisippus, for wronging her so unkindly.

But before any further noyse was made in the house, shee went to her Father, to whom, as also to her Mother, shee declared the whole trecherie, how much both they and their other friends were wronged by Gisippus, avouching her selfe to be the wife of Titus, and not of Gisippus, as they supposed. These newes were highly displeasing to the Father of Sophronia, who with hir kinred, as also those of Gisippus, made great complaints to the Senate, very dangerous troubles and commotions arising daily betweene them, drawing both Gisippus and Sophronia into harsh reports; he being generally reputed, not onely worthy of all bitter reproofe, but also the severest punishment. Neverthelesse, hee maintained publikely what he had done, avouching it for an act both of honour and honestie, wherewith Sophronia's friends had no reason to bee offended, but rather to take it in very thankfull part, having married a man of farre greater worth and respect, than himselfe was, or could be.

On the other side, Titus hearing these uncivill acclamations, became much moved and provoked at them, but knowing it was a custome observed among the Greeks, to be so much the more hurried away with rumours and threatnings, as lesse they finde them to be answered, and when they finde them, shew themselves not onely humble enough, but rather as base men, and of no courage; he resolved with himselfe, that their braveries were no longer to be endured, without some bold and manly answere. And having a Romane heart, as also an Athenian understanding, by politique perswasions, he caused the kinred of Gisippus and Sophronia, to be assembled in a Temple, and himselfe comming thither, accompanied with none but Gisippus onely, he began to deliver his minde before them all, in this manner following.

"Many Philosophers doe hold opinion, that the actions performed by mortall men, doe proceed from the disposing and ordination of the immortall gods. Whereupon some doe maintaine, that things which be done, or never are to be done, proceed of necessity: howbeit some other doe hold, that this necessity is onely referred to things done. Both which opinions (if they be considered with mature judgment) doe most manifestly approve, that they who reprehend any thing which is irrevocable, doe nothing else but shew themselves, as if they were wiser then the Gods, who we are to beleeve, that with perpetuall reason, and void of any error, doe dispose and governe both us, and all our actions; In which respect, how foolish and beast-like a thing it is, presumptuously to checke or controule their operations, you may very easily consider; and likewise, how justly they deserve condigne punishment, who suffer themselves to be transported in so temerarious a manner.

"In which notorious transgression, I understand you all to be guiltie, if common fame speake truely, concerning the marriage of my selfe and Sophronia, whom you imagined as given to Gisippus; for you never remember that it was so ordained from eternitie, shee to be mine, and no Wife for Gisippus, as at this instant is made manifest by full effect. But because the kinde of speaking, concerning divine providence, and intention of the Gods, may seeme a difficult matter to many, and somewhat hard to bee understood: I am content to presuppose, that they meddle not with any thing of ours, and will onely stay my selfe on humane reasons, and in this nature of speech, I shall be enforced to doe two things, quite contrary to my naturall disposition. The one is, to speake somewhat in praise and commendation of my selfe: And the other, justly to blame and condemne other mens seeming estimation. But because both in the one and the other, I doe not intend to swerve a jot from the Truth, and the necessitie of the present case in question, doth not onely require, but also command it, you must pardon what I am to say.

"Your complaints doe proceed, rather from furie then reason, and (with continuall murmurings, or rather seditions) slander, backe-bite and condemne Gisippus, because (of his owne free will and noble disposition) hee gave her to be my Wife, whom (by your election) was made his; wherein I account him most highly praiseworthy: and the reasons inducing mee thereunto, are these. The first, because he hath performed no more then what a friend ought to doe: And the second, in regard he hath dealt more wisely, then you did. I have no intention, to display (at this present) what the sacred law of amitie requireth, to be acted by one friend towards another, it shall suffice mee onely to informe you, that the league of friendship (farre stronger then the bond of bloud and kinred) confirmed us in our election of either at the first, to be true, loyall and perpetuall friends; whereas that of kinred, commeth onely by fortune or chance. And therefore if Gisippus affected more my life, then your benevolence, I being ordained for his friend, as I confesse my selfe to be; none of you ought to wonder thereat, in regard it is no matter of mervaile.

"But let us come now to our second reason, wherein, with farre greater instance I will shew you, that he hath (in this occasion) shewen himselfe to be much more wise, then you did, or have done: because it plainely appeareth, that you have no feeling of the divine providence, and much lesse knowledge in the effects of friendship. I say, that your foresight, councell and deliberation, gave Sophronia to Gisippus, a yong Gentleman, and a Philosopher: Gisippus likewise hath given her to a yong Gentleman, and a Philosopher, as himselfe is. Your discretion gave her to an Athenian; the gift of Gisippus, is to a Romaine. Yours, to a Noble and honest man; that of Gisippus, to one more Noble by race, and no lesse honest then himselfe. Your judgement hath bestowed her on a rich young man: Gisippus hath given her to one farre richer. Your wisedome gave her to one who not onely loved her not, but also one that had no desire to know her: Gisippus gave her unto him, who, above all felicitie else, yea, more than his owne life, both entirely loved and desired her.

"Now, for proofe of that which I have said, to be most true and infallible, and that his deede deserveth to bee much more commended then yours, let it bee duely considered on, point by point. That I am a young man and a Philosopher, as Gisippus is; my yeares, face, and studies, without seeking after further proofe, doth sufficiently testifie: One selfe-same age is both his and mine, in like quality of course have wee lived and studied together. True it is, that hee is an Athenian, and I am a Romaine. But if the glory of these two Cities should bee disputed on: then let mee tell you, that I am of a Citie that is Francke and Free, and hee is of a Tributarie Citie. I say that I am of a Citie, which is chiefe Lady and Mistresse of the whole World, and hee is of a Citie subject to mine. I say that I am of a Citie, that is strong in Arms, Empire, and studies: whereas his can commend it selfe but for Studies onely. And although you seeme heere to bee a Scholler, in appearance meane enough, yet I am not descended of the simplest stocke in Rome.

"My houses and publique places, are filled with the ancient Statues of my Predecessors, and the Annales recorde the infinite triumphs of the Quintij, brought home by them into the Romane Capitole, and yeares cannot eate out the glory of our name, but it will live and flourish to all posteritie.

"Modest shame makes me silent in my wealth and possessions, my minde truely telling mee, that honest contented povertie, is the most ancient and richest inheritance, of our best and Noblest Romanes, which opinion, if it bee condemned by the understanding of the ignorant multitude, and heerein wee shall give way to them by preferring riches and worldly treasures, then I can say that I am aboundantly provided, not as ambitious, or greedily covetous, but sufficiently stored with the goods of Fortune.

"I know well enough, that you held it as a desired benefit, Gisippus being a Native of your Citie, should also be linked to you by alliance: but I know no reason, why I should not be as neere and deere to you at Rome, as if I lived with you heere. Considering, when I am there, you have a ready and well wishing friend, to stead you in all beneficiall and serviceable offices, as carefull and provident for your support, yea, a protectour of you and your affaires, as well publique as particular. Who is it then, not transported with partiall affection, that can (in reason) more approve your act, then that which my friend Gisippus hath done? Questionlesse, not any one, as I thinke. Sophronia is married to Titus Quintus Fulvius, a Noble Gentleman by antiquitie, a rich Citizen of Rome, and (which is above all) the friend of Gisippus: therfore, such a one as thinkes it strange, is sorrie for it, or would not have it to be; knoweth not what he doth.

"Perhaps there may be some, who will say, they doe not so much complain, that Sophronia is the wife to Titus; but of the manner whereby it was done, as being made his wife secretly, and by theft, not any of her parents, kinred or friends called thereto: no, nor so much as advertised thereof. Why Gentlemen, this is no miraculous thing, but heeretofore hath oftentimes happened, and therefore no noveltie.

"I cannot count unto you, how many there have beene, who (against the will of their Fathers) have made choice of their husbands; nor them that have fled away with their lovers into strange Countries, being first friends, before they were wives:

nor of them who have sooner made testimonie of marriage by their bellies, then those ceremonies due to matrimonie, or publication thereof by the tongue; so that meere necessity and constraint, hath forced the parents to yeeld consent: which hath not so happened to Sophronia, for she was given to me by Gisippus discreetly, honestly, and orderly.

"Others also may say, that shee is married to him, to whom it belonged not to marrie her. These complaints are foolish, and womanish, proceeding from verie little, or no consideration at all. In these daies of ours, Fortune makes no use of novell or inconsiderate meanes, whereby to bring matters to their determined effect. Why should it offend me, if a Cobler, rather than a Scholler, hath ended a businesse of mine, either in private or publique, if the end be well made? Well I may take order, if the Cobler bee indiscreet, that hee meddle no more with any matters of mine, yet I ought, in courtesie, to thanke him for that which hee did.

"In like manner, if Gisippus hath married Sophronia well, it is foolish and superfluous, to finde fault with the manner hee used in her marriage. If you mislike his course in the case, beware of him hereafter, yet thanke him because it is no worse.

"Neverthelesse, you are to understand, that I sought not by fraud or deceit, (but onely by witte) any opportunitie, whereby any way to sullie the honestie and cleere Nobilitie of your bloud, in the person of Sophronia: for although in secret I made her my wife, yet I came not as an enemie, to take her perforce, nor (like a ravisher) wronged her virginitie, to blemish your noble titles, or despising your alliance. But fervently, enflamed by her bright beauty, and incited also by her unparalleld vertues, I shaped my course; knowing well enough, that if I tooke the ordinarie way of wiving, by moving the question to you, I should never winne your consent, as fearing, lest I would take her with me to Rome, and so conveigh out of your sight, a Jewell by you so much esteemed, as she is.

"For this, and no other reason, did I presume to use the secret cunning which now is openly made knowne unto you: and Gisippus disposed himselfe thereunto, which otherwise hee never determined to have done, in contracting the marriage for mee, and shee consenting to me in his name.

"Moreover, albeit most earnestly I affected her, I sought to procure your union, not like a lover, but as a true husband, nor would I immodestly touch her, till first (as her selfe can testifie) with the words becomming wedlocke, and the Ring also I espoused her, demanding of her, if shee would accept mee as her husband, and shee answered mee, with her full consent. Wherein, if it may seeme that shee was deceived, I am not any way to be blamed, but she, for not demanding, what, and who I was.

"This then is the great evill, the great offence, and the great injurie committed by my friend Gisippus, and by mee as a Lover: that Sophronia is secretly become the wife of Titus Quintus Fulvius. And for this cause, like spies you watch him, threaten him daily, as if you intended to teare him in pieces. What could you doe more, if hee had given her to a man of the very vilest condition? to a villaine, to a slave? What prisons? what fetters? Or what torments are sufficient for this fact? But leaving these frivolous matters, let us come to discourse of more moment, and better beseeming your attention.

"The time is come, that I may no longer continue heere, because Publius my Father is dead, and I must needs returne to Rome, wherefore being minded to take Sophronia thither with mee, I was the more willing to acquaint you therewith, as also what else I have said, which otherwise had still beene concealed from you. Nor can you but take it in good part, if you be wise, and rest well contented with what is done: considering, if I had any intention eyther to deceive, or otherwise wrong you, I could have basely left her, and made a scorne both of her and you, you not having any power to stay mee heere. But the Gods will never permitte that any couragious Romane, should ever conceive so vile and degenerate a thought.

"Sophronia, by ordination of the Gods, by force of humane Lawes, and by the laudable consent of my friend Gisippus, as also the powerfull command of Love is mine. But you perchance, imagining your selves to be wiser then the Gods, or any other men whatsoever; may thinke ill of it, and more brutishly then beasts, condemne their working in two kinds, which would be offensive to mee. The one is, your detaining of Sophronia from mee, of whom you have no power, but what pleaseth mee. The other, is your bitter threatnings against Gisippus my deare friend, to whom you are in duty obliged. In both which cases, how unreasonablie soever you carrie your selves, I intend not at this time to presse any further. But rather let mee counsell you like a friend, to cease your hatred and disdaine, and suffer Sophronia to be delivered mee, that I may depart contentedly from you as a kinsman, and (being absent) remaine your friend: assuring you, that whether what is done shall please or displease you, if you purpose to proceed any otherwise: I will take Gisippus along with mee, and when I come to Rome, take such sure order, to fetch her hence, who in Justice is mine, even in meere despight of you all, and then you shall feele by sound experience, how powerfull is the just indignation of the wronged Romanes."

When Titus had thus concluded his Oration, he arose with a sterne and discontented countenance, and tooke Gisippus by the hand, plainly declaring, that he made small account of all the rest that were in the Temple; and shaking his head at them, rather menaced then any other wise seemed to care for them.

They which tarried, when they were gone, considering partly on the reasons alleadged by Titus, and partly terrified by his latest speeches; became induced, to like well of his alliance and amitie, as (with common consent) they concluded: that it was much better to accept Titus as their kinsman (seeing Gisippus had made manifest refusall thereof) than to lose the kinred of the one, and procure the hatred of the other. Wherefore they went to seeke Titus, and said unto him, they were very well contented that Sophronia should bee his Wife, hee their deare and loving kinsman, and Gisippus to remaine their much respected friend. And embracing one another, making a solemne feast, such as in the like cases is necessarilie required, they departed from him, presently sending Sophronia to him, who making a vertue of necessity, converted her love (in short time after) to Titus, in as effectuall manner, as formerly shee had done to Gisippus, and so was sent away with him to Rome, where she was received and welcommed with very great honour.

Gisippus remaining still at Athens, in small regard of eyther theirs or his owne friends: not long after by meanes of sundry troublesome Citizens; and partialities happening among the common people, was banished from Athens, and hee, as also all his familie, condemned to perpetuall exile: during which tempestuous time, Gisippus was become not onely wretchedly poore, but wandred abroad as a common begger; in which miserable condition he travelled to Rome, to try if Titus would take any acknowledgement of him. Understanding that he was living, and one most respected among the Romanes, as being a great Commander and a Senator: he enquired for the place where hee dwelt, and going to be neere about his house, stayed there so long, till

Titus came home, yet not daring to manifest himselfe, or speake a word to him, in regard of his poore and miserable estate, but strove to have him see him, to the end, that hee might acknowledge and call him by his name; notwithstanding, Titus passed by him without either speech, or looking on him: Which when Gisippus perceived, and making full account, that (at the least) he would remember him, in regard of former courtesies, done to him: confounded with griefe and desperate thoughtes, hee departed thence, never meaning to see him any more.

Now, in regard it was night, he having eaten nothing all that day, nor provided of one penny to buy him any food, wandred he knew not whether, desiring rather to die than live; hee came at last to an old ruinous part of the City, over-spred with briers and bushes, and seldome resorted unto by any: where finding a hollow Cave or vault, he entred into it, meaning there to weare away the comfortlesse night, and laying himselfe downe on the hard ground, almost starke naked, and without any warme garments, over-wearied with weeping, at last he fell into a sleepe.

It fortuned that two men, who had beene abroad the same night, committing thefts and robberies together; somwhat very earlie in the morning, came to the same Cave, intending there to share and divide their booties, and difference happening betweene them about it, hee that was the stronger person, slew there the other, and then went away with the whole purchase.

Gisippus having heard and seene the manner of this accident, was not a little joyfull, because he had now found a way to death, without laying any violent hand on himselfe; for life being very loathsome to him, it was his only desire to die. Wherfore, he would not budge from the place, but taried there so long, till the Sergeants and Officers of Justice (by information of him that did the deede) came thither well attended, and furiously ledde Gisippus thence to prison.

Being examined concerning this bloudy fact, he plainly confessed, that hee himselfe had committed the murder, and afterward would not depart from the Cave, but purposely stayed for apprehension, as being truely toucht with compunction for so foule an offence: upon which peremptorie confession, Marcus Varro being then Prætor, gave sentence that he should be crucified on a Crosse, as it was the usuall manner of death in those dayes. Titus chancing to come at the same time into Prætorium, advisedly beholding the face of the condemned man (as hee sate upon the bench) knew him to bee Gysippus, not a little wondring at this strange accident, the povertie of his estate, and what occasion should bring him thither, especially in the questioning for his life, and before the Tribunall of Justice.

His soule earnestly thirsting, by all possible meanes to helpe and defend him, and no other course could now be taken for safetie of his life, but by accusing himselfe, to excuse and cleare the other of the crime: hee stept from off the judgement bench, and crouding through the throng to the Barre, called out to the Prætor in this manner. Marcus Varro, recall thy sentence given on the condemned man sent away, because hee is truely guiltlesse and innocent: With one bloudie blow have I offended the Gods, by killing that wretched man, whom the Serjeants found this morning slaine, wherefore Noble Prætor, let no innocent mans bloud be shed for it, but onely mine that have offended.

Marcus Varro stood like a man confounded with admiration, being very sorrie, for that which the whole assistants had both seene and heard, yet hee could not (with honour) desist from what must needs be done, but would performe the Lawes severe injunction. And sending for condemned Gisippus backe againe, in the presence of Titus, thus he spake to him. How becamest thou so madly incensed, as (without any torment inflicted on thee) to confesse an offence by thee never committed? Art thou wearie of thy life? Thou chargest thy selfe falsly, to be the person who this last night murdered the man in the Cave, and there is another that voluntarily also doth confesse his guiltinesse.

Gisippus lifting up his eyes, and perceiving it was Titus, conceived immediately, that he had done this onely for his deliverance, as one that remembred him sufficiently, and would not be ungratefull for former kindnesses received. Wherefore, the teares flowing abundantly down his cheekes, he said to the Judge Varro, it was none but I that murdered the man, wherefore, I commiserate the case of this Noble Gentleman Titus, who speakes now too late for the safety of my life. Titus on the other side, said. Noble Prætor, this man (as thou seest) is a stranger heere, and was found without any weapon, fast asleepe by the dead body: thou mayst then easily perceive, that meerely the miserable condition wherein he is, hath made him desperate, and he would make mine offence the occasion of his death. Absolve him, and send me to the Crosse, for none but I have deserved to die for this fact.

Varro was amazed, to observe with what earnest instance each of them strove to excuse the other, which halfe perswaded him in his soule, that they were both guiltlesse. And as he was starting up, with full intent to acquaint them: a yong man, who had stood there all this while, and observed the hard pleading on either side; he crowded into the Barre, being named Publius Ambustus, a fellow of lewd life, and utterly out of hopes, as being debauched in all his fortunes, and knowne among the Romaines to be a notorious theefe, who verily had committed the murder. Well knew his conscience, that none of them were guilty of the crime, wherewith each so wilfully charged himselfe: being therefore truely toucht with remorse, he stept before Marcus Varro, saying.

Honourable Prætor, mine owne horrid and abominable actions, have induced me thus to intrude my selfe, for clearing the strict contention betweene these two persons. And questionlesse, some God or greater power, hath tormented my wretched soule, and so compunctually solicited me, as I cannot chuse, but make open confession of my sinne. Here therefore, I doe apparantly publish, that neither of these men is guilty of the offence, wherewith so wilfully each chargeth himselfe. I am the villaine, who this morning murdered the man in the Cave, one of no greater honesty then my selfe, and seeing this poore man lie there sleeping, while we were dividing the stolne booties betweene us; I slew my Companyon, because I would be the sole possessor. As for Noble Lord Titus, he had no reason thus to accuse himselfe, because [he] is a man of no such base quality: let them both then be delivered, and inflict the sentence of death on me.

Octavius Cæsar, to whom tydings was brought of this rare accident, commanding them al three to be brought before him; would needs understand the whole History, in every particular as all had happened, which was substantially related to him. Whereupon, Octavius pleased them all three: the two noble friendes, because they were innocent, and the third, for openly revealing the very truth.

Titus tooke home with him his friend Gisippus, and after he had sharpely reproved him for his distrust, and cold credence of his friendship: he brought him to Sophronia, who welcomed him as lovingly, as if he had bin her naturall borne brother, bemoaning his hard and disastrous fortune, and taking especiall care, to convert all passed distresses, into as happy and comfortable a change, fitting him with garments and attendants, beseeming his degree both in Nobility and vertue. Titus, out of his honourable bounty, imparted halfe his lands and rich possessions to him, and afterward gave him in marriage, his owne Sister, a most beautifull Lady, named Fulvia, saying to him beside. My deare friend Gisippus, it remaineth now in thine owne election, whether thou wilt live here still with me, or returne backe to Athens, with all the wealth which I have bestowed on thee. But Gisippus, being one way constrayned, by the sentence of banishment from his native City, and then againe, in regard of the constant love, which he bare to so true and thankefull friend as Titus was: concluded to live there as a loyall Roman, where he with his Fulvia, and Titus with his faire Sophronia, lived long after together in one and the same house, augmenting daily (if possible it might be) their amity beyond all other equalizing.

A most sacred thing therefore is cordiall amity, worthy not onely of singuler reverence, but also to be honoured with eternall commendation, as being the onely wise Mother of all magnificence and honesty, the Sister of Charity and Gratitude, the enemy to hatred and avarice, and which is alwayes ready (without attending to be requested) to extend all vertuous actions to others, which she would have done to her selfe. Her rare and divine effects, in these contrary times of ours, are not to be found between two such persons, which is a mighty fault, and greatly checketh the miserable covetousnesse of men, who respecting nothing but onely their particular benefit; have banished true Amity, to the utmost confines of the whole earth, and sent her into perpetuall exile.

What love, what wealth, or affinity of kindred, could have made Gisippus feele (even in the intyrest part of his soule) the fervent compassion, the teares, the sighes of Titus, and with such efficacy as plainely appeared: to make him consent, that his faire elected Spouse, by him so dearely esteemed, should become the wife of his Companion, but onely the precious league of Amity? What Lawes, what threatnings, what feares, could cause the yong armes of Gisippus to abstaine embraces, betaking himselfe to solitary walkes, and obscure places, when in his owne bedde, he might have enjoyed so matchlesse a beauty (who perhaps desired it so much as himselfe) but onely the gracious title of Amity? What greatnesse, what merits or precedence, could cause Gisippus not to care, for the losse of his kindred, those of Sophronia, yea, of Sophronia her selfe, not respecting the dishonest murmurings of base minded people, their vile and contemptible language, scornes and mockeries, and all to content and satisfie a friend, but onely Divine Amity?

Come now likewise to the other side. What occasions could compell Noble Titus, so promptly and deliberatly, to procure his owne death, to rescue his friend from the crosse, and inflict the pain and shame upon himselfe, pretending not [to] see or know Gisippus at all, had it not bin wrought by powerfull Amity? What cause else could make Titus so liberall, in dividing (with such willingnesse) the larger part of his patrimony to Gisippus, when Fortune had dispossest him of his owne, but onely heaven-borne Amity? What else could have procured Titus, without any further dilation, feare or suspition, to give his Sister Fulvia in marriage to Gisippus, when he saw him reduced to such extreame poverty, disgrace and misery, but onely infinite Amity? To what end doe men care then, to covet and procure great multitudes of kinred, store of brethren, numbers of children, and to encrease (with their owne monyes) plenty of servants: when by the least losse and dammage happening, they forget all duty to Father, Brother, or Master? Amity and true friendship is of a quite contrary nature, satisfying (in that sacred bond) the obligation due to all degrees, both of parentage, and all alliences else.

THE NINTH NOVELL

DECLARING WHAT AN HONOURABLE VERTUE COURTESIE IS, IN THEM THAT TRUELY KNOW HOW TO USE THEM.

SALADINE, *the great Soldan of Babylon, in the habite of a Merchant, was honourably received and welcommed, into the house of Signior Thorello d'Istria. Who travelling to the Holy Land, prefixed a certaine time to his Wife, for his returne backe to her againe, wherein, if he failed, it was lawfull for her to take another Husband. By clouding himselfe in the disguise of a Faulkner, the Soldan tooke notice of him, and did him many great honours. Afterward, Thorello falling sicke, by Magicall Art, he was conveighed in one night to Pavia, when his Wife was to be married on the morrow: where making himselfe knowne to her, all was disappointed, and shee went home with him to his owne house.*

MADAME Philomena having concluded her discourse, and the rare acknowledgement, which Titus made of his esteemed friend Gisippus, extolled justly as it deserved by all the Company: the King, reserving the last office to Dioneus (as it was at the first granted him) began to speake thus. Without all question to the contrary (worthy Ladies) nothing can be more truely said, then what Madame Philomena, hath delivered, concerning Amity, and her complaint in the conclusion of her Novell, is not without great reason, to see it so slenderly reverenced and respected (now a dayes) among all men. But if we had met here in duty onely for correcting the abuses of iniquity, and the malevolent courses of this preposterous age; I could proceed further in this just cause of complaint. But because our end aimeth at matters of other nature, it commeth to my memory to tel you of a History, which (perhaps) may seeme somewhat long, but altogether pleasant, concerning a magnificent act of great Saladine: to the end, that by observing those things which you shall heare in my Novell, if we cannot (by reason of our manifold imperfections) intirely compasse the amity of any one; yet (at least) we may take delight, in stretching our kindnesse (in good deeds) so farre as we are able, in hope one day after, some worthy reward will ensue thereon, as thereto justly appertaining.

Let me tell you then, that (as it is affirmed by many) in the time of the Emperour Frederick, first of that name, the Christians, for the better recovery of the holy land, resolved to make a generall voyage over the Seas. Which being understood by Saladine, a very worthy Prince, and then Soldan of Babylon: he concluded with himselfe, that he would (in person) goe see, what preparation the Christian Potentates made for this Warre, that hee might the better provide for himselfe. Having setled all things orderly in Ægypt for the busines, and making an outward appearance, as if he purposed a pilgrimage to Mecha: he set onward on his journey, habited like a Merchant, attended onely with two of his most Noble and wisest Baschaes, and three waiting servants.

When he had visited many Christian Provinces, and was riding thorow Lombardie, to passe the mountaines; it fortuned, in his journeying from Millaine to Pavia, and the day being very farre spent, so that night hastened speedily on him: he met with a Gentleman, named Signior Thorella d'Istria, but dwelling at Pavia, who with his men, Hawkes and Hounds, went to a house of his, seated in a singular place, and on the River of Ticinum. Signior Thorello seeing such men making towardes him, presently imagined, that they were some Gentle-strangers, and such hee desired to respect with honor.

Wherefore, Saladine demanding of one of Thorelloes men, how farre (as then) it was to Pavia, and whether they might reach thither by such an houre, as would admit their entrance into the Citty: Thorello would not suffer his servant to returne the answer, but replyed thus himselfe. Sir (quoth he) you cannot reach Pavia, but night will abridge you of any entraunce there. I beseech you then Sir, answered Saladine, favour us so much (because we are all strangers in these parts) as to tell us where we may be well lodged. That shal I Sir, said Thorello, and very gladly too.

Even at the instant Sir, as we met with you, I had determined in my mind, to send one of my servants somewhat neere to Pavia, about a businesse concerning my selfe: he shall go along with you, and conduct you to a place, where you will be very well entertayned. So, stepping to him, who was of best discretion amongst his men, he gave order to him what should bee done, and sent him with them. Himselfe, making hast by a farre neerer way, caused Supper to be prepared in worthy manner, and the Tables to be covered in his Garden; and all things being in good readinesse, he sate downe at his doore, to attend the comming of his guests. The Servingman, discoursing with the Gentlemen on divers occasions, guided them by such unusuall passages, as (before they could discerne it) he brought them to his Masters house; where so soone as Thorello saw them arrived, he went forth to meet them, assuring them all of most hearty welcome.

Saladine, who was a man of accute understanding, did well perceive, that this Knight Thorello misdoubted his going with him, if (when he met him) hee should have invited him; and therefore, because he would not be denied, of entertaining him into his house; he made choise of this kinde and honourable course, which caused him to returne this answer. Gentle Sir, if courtesie in one man to another, do deserve condemning, then may we justly complaine of you, who meeting us upon the way, which you have shortened by your kindnesse, and which we are no way able to deserve, wee are constrained to accept, taking you to bee the mirrour of courtesie. Thorello being a Knight of ingenious apprehension, and wel languaged, replyed thus.

Gentlemen; this courtesie (seeing you terme it so) which you receive of me, in regard of that justly belonging to you, as your faces do sufficiently informe mee, is matter of very slender account. But assuredly out of Pavia, you could not have any lodging, deserving to be termed good. And therefore, let it not bee displeasing to you, if you have a little gone forth of the common rode way, to have your entertainment somewhat bettered, as many travaylers are easily induced to do.

Having thus spoken, all the people of the house shewed themselves, in serviceable manner to the Gentlemen, taking their horses as they dismounted, and Thorello himselfe, conducted the three Gentlemen, into three severall faire Chambers, which in costly maner were prepared for them, where their boots were pluckt off, faire Napkins with Manchets lay ready, and delicate Wines to refresh their wearied spirits, much prety conference being entercoursed, til Supper time invited them thence.

Saladine, and they that were with him, spake the Latine tongue very readily, by which meanes they were the better understoode; and Thorello seemed (in their judgement) to bee the most gracious, compleate, and best spoken Gentleman, as ever they met with in all their journey. It appeared also (on the other side) to Signiour Thorello, that his guests were men of great merit, and worthy of much more esteeme, then there he could use towards them: wherefore, it did highly distast him, that he had no more friends there this night to keepe them company, or himselfe better provided for their entertainment, which hee intended (on the morrow) to recompence with larger amends at dinner.

Heereupon, having instructed one of his men with what hee intended, he sent him to Pavia, which was not farre off (and where he kept no doore shut) to his Wife, named Madam Adialetta; a Woman singularly wise, and of a Noble spirit, needing little or no direction, especially when she knew her husbands minde. As they were walking in the Garden, Thorello desired to understand, of whence, and what they were? Whereto Saladine thus answered. Sir, wee are Cyprian Marchants, comming now from Cyprus, and are travailing to Paris, about affaires of importance. Now trust me Syr, replyed Thorello, I could heartily wish, that this Countrey of ours would yeeld such Gentlemen, as your Cyprus affordeth Marchants. So, falling from one discourse unto another, Supper was served in; and looke howe best themselves pleased, so they sate at the Table, where (we neede make no doubt) they were respected in honourable order.

So soone as the Tables were withdrawne, Thorello knowing they might be weary, brought them againe to their Chambers, where committing them to their good rest, himselfe went to bed soone after. The Servant sent to Pavia, delivered the message to his Lady; who, not like a woman of ordinary disposition, but rather truely Royall, sent Thorelloes servants into the City, to make preparation for a Feast indeed, and with lighted Torches (because it was somewhat late) they invited the very greatest and noblest persons of the Citie, all the roomes being hanged with the richest Arras, Clothes and Golde worke, Velvets, Silkes, and all other rich adornments, in such manner as her husband had commanded, and answerable to her owne worthy mind, being no way to learne, in what manner to entertaine strangers.

On the morrow morning, the Gentlemen arose, and mounting on horsebacke with Signior Thorello, he called for his Hawkes and Hounds, brought them to the River, where he shewed two or three faire flights: but Saladine desiring to know, which was the fayrest Hostery in all Pavia, Thorello answered. Gentlemen, I wil shew you that my selfe, in regard I have occasion to ride thither. Which they beleeving, were the better contented, and rode on directly unto Pavia; arriving there about nine of the clocke, and thinking he guided them to the best Inne, he brought them to his owne house; where, above fifty of the worthiest Citizens, stood ready to welcome the Gentlemen, imbracing them as they lighted from their Horsses. Which Saladine, and his associates perceiving, they guessed as it was indeede, and Saladine sayd. Beleeve me worthy Thorello, this is not answerable to my demand; you did too much yester night, and much more then we could desire or deserve: Wherefore, you might wel be the sooner discharged of us, and let us travaile on our journey.

Noble Gentlemen, replyed Thorello (for in mine eye you seeme no lesse) that courtesie which you met with yester-night, I am to thanke Fortune for, more then you, because you were then straited by such necessity, as urged your acceptance of my poore Country house. But now this morning, I shall account my selfe much beholding to you (as the like will all these worthy Gentlemen here about you) if you do but answer kindnes with kindnes, and not refuse to take a homely dinner with them.

Saladine and his friends, being conquerd with such potent perswasions, and already dismounted from their horses, saw that all deniall was meerly in vaine: and therefore thankfully condiscending (after some few ceremonious complements were over-past) the Gentlemen conducted them to their Chambers, which were most sumptuously prepared for them, and having laid aside their riding garments, being a little refreshed with Cakes and choice Wines; they descended into the dining Hall, the pompe whereof I am not able to report.

When they had washed, and were seated at the Tables, dinner was served in most magnificent sort; so that if the Emperor himself had bin there, he could not have bin more sumptuously served. And although Saladine and his Baschaes were very Noble Lords, and wonted to see matters of admiration: yet could they do no lesse now, but rather exceeded in marvaile, considering the qualitie of the Knight, whom they knew to bee a Citizen, and no Prince or great Lord. Dinner being ended, and divers familiar conferences passing amongst them: because it was exceeding hot, the Gentlemen of Pavia (as it pleased Thorello to appoint) went to repose themselves awhile, and he keeping company with his three guests, brought them into a goodly Chamber, where, because he would not faile in the least scruple of courtesie, or conceale from them the richest Jewell which he had; he sent for his Lady and wife, because (as yet) they had not seene her.

She was a Lady of extraordinary beauty, tall stature, very sumptuously attired, and having two sweet Sonnes (resembling Angels) she came with them waiting before her, and graciously saluted her guests. At her comming, they arose, and having received hir with great reverence, they seated her in the midst, kindly cherishing the two Children. After some gracious Language past on eyther side, she demanded of whence, and what they were, which they answered in the same kind as they had done before to her husband. Afterward, with a modest smiling countenance, she sayd. Worthy Gentlemen, let not my weake Womanish discretion appeare distastable, in desiring to crave one especiall favour from you, namely, not to refuse or disdaine a small gift, wherewith I purpose to present you. But considering first, that women (according to their simple faculty) are able to bestow but silly gifts: so you would be pleased, to respect more the person that is the giver, then the quality or quantity of the gift.

Then causing to be brought (for each of them) two goodly gowns or Robes (made after the Persian manner) the one lyned thorough with cloth of Gold, and the other with the costlyest Fur; not after such fashion as Citizens or Marchants use to weare, but rather beseeming Lords of greatest account, and three light under-wearing Cassocks or Mandillions, of Carnatian Sattin, richly Imbroidred with Gold and Pearles, and lined thorow with White Taffata, presenting these gifts to him, she sayd. I desire you Gentlemen to receive these meane trifles, such as you see my Husband weares the like, and these other beside, considering you are so far from your Wives, having travailed a long way already, and many miles more yet to overtake; also Marchants (being excellent men) affect to be comely and handsome in their habits; although these are of slender value, yet (in necessity) they may do you service.

Now was Saladine and his Baschaes halfe astonyed with admiration, at the magnificent minde of Signiour Thorello, who would not forget the least part of courtesie towardes them, and greatly doubted (seeing the beauty and riches of the Garments) least they were discovered by Thorello. Neverthelesse, one of them thus answered the Lady. Beleeve me Madame, these are rich guiftes, not lightly either to be given, or receyved: but in regard of your strict imposition, we are not able to deny them. This being done, with most gracious and courteous demeanour, she departed from them, leaving her Husband to keepe them still companie; who furnished their servants also, with divers worthy necessaries fitting for their journey.

Afterward, Thorello (by very much importunitie) wonne them to stay with him all the rest of the day; wherefore, when they had rested themselves awhile, being attyred in their newly given robes; they rode on Horsebacke thorow the Citty. When supper time came, they supt in most honourable and worthy company, beeing afterwards Lodged in most faire and sumptuous Chambers, and being risen in the morning, in exchange of their horses (over-wearied with Travaile) they found three other very richly furnished, and their men also in like manner provided. Which when Saladine had perceyved, he tooke his Baschaes aside, and spake in this manner.

By our greatest Gods, I never met with any man, more compleat in all noble perfections, more courteous and kinde then Thorello is. If all the Christian Kings, in the true and heroicall nature of Kings, do deale as honourably as I see this Knight doeth, the Soldane of Babylon is not able to endure the comming of one of them, much lesse so many, as wee see preparing to make head against us. But beholding, that both refusall and acceptation, was all one in the minde of Thorello: after much kinde Language had bin intercoursed betweene them, Saladine (with his Attendants) mounted on horsebacke.

Signiour Thorello, with a number of his honourable Friends (to the number of an hundred Horsse) accompanied them a great distance from the Citie, and although it greeved Saladine exceedingly, to leave the company of Thorello, so dearely he was affected to him: but necessity (which controlleth the power of all lawes whatsoever) must needs divide them: yet requesting his returne agayne that way, if possibly it might be granted; which Saladine promised but did not performe. Well Gentlemen (quoth Thorello at parting) I know not what you are, neither (against your will) do I desire it: but whether you be Marchants or no, remember me in your kindnesse, and so to the heavenly powers I commend you. Saladine, having taken his leave of all them that were with Thorello, returned him this answer. Sir, it may one day hereafter so happen, as we shal let you see some of our Marchandises, for the better confirmation of your beleefe, and our profession.

Thus parted Signior Thorello and his friends, from Saladine and his company, who verily determined in the heighth of his minde, if he should be spared with life, and the warre (which he expected) concluded: to requite Thorello with no lesse courtesie, then hee had already declared to him; conferring a long while after with his Baschaes, both of him and his beauteous Lady, not forgetting any of their courteous actions, but gracing them all with deserved commendation. But after they had (with very laborious paines) surveyed most of the Westerne parts, they all tooke Shipping, and returned into Alexandria: sufficiently informed, what preparation was to be made for their owne defence. And Signior Thorello being come backe againe to Pavia, consulted with his privat thoughts (many times after) what these three travailers should be, but came farre short of knowing the truth, till (by experience) hee became better informed.

When the time was come, that the Christians were to make their passage, and wonderfull great preparations, in all places performed: Signiour Thorello, notwithstanding the teares and intreaties of his Wife, determined to be one in so woorthy and honourable a voyage: and having made his provision ready, nothing wanting but mounting on Horsebacke, to go where he should take shipping; to his Wife (whom he most intirely affected) thus hee spake. Madame, I goe as thou seest in this famous Voyage, as well for mine Honour, as also the benefite of my soule; all our goodes and possessions, I commit to thy vertuous care. And because I am not certaine of my returning backe againe, in regard of a thousand accidents which may happen, in such a Countrey as I goe unto: I desire onely but one favour of thee, whatsoever daunger shall befall mee; Namely, when any certaine tydings shall be brought you of my death; to stay no longer before thy second marriage, but one yeare, one month, and one day; to begin on this day of my departing from thee.

The Lady, who wept exceedingly, thus answered. Alas Sir: I know not how to carry my selfe, in such extremity of greefe, as now you leave me; but if my life surmount the fortitude of sorrow, and whatsoever shall happen to you for certainty, either life or death: I will live and dye the Wife of Signiour Thorello, and make my obsequies in his memory onely.

Not so Madame (replyed her Husband) not so; Be not overrash in promising any thing, albeit I am well assured, that so much as consisteth in thy strength, I make no question of thy performance. But consider withall (deare heart) thou art a yong woman, beautifull, of great parentage, and no way thereto inferior in the blessings of Fortune.

Thy Vertues are many, and universally both divulged and knowen, in which respect, I make no doubt; but divers and sundrie great Lords and Gentlemen (if but the least rumor of my death be noysed) will make suite for thee to thy parents and brethren, from whose violent solicitings, wouldst thou never so resolutely make resistance, yet thou canst not be able to defend thy selfe; but whether thou wilt or no, thou must yeeld to please them; and this is the only reason, why I would tie thee to this limited time, and not one day or minute longer.

Adalietta, sweetly hugging him in her armes, and melting her selfe in kisses, sighes, and teares on his face, said. Well Sir, I will do so much as I am able, in this your most kinde and loving imposition: and when I shall bee compelled to the contrary: yet rest thus constantly assured, that I will not breake this your charge, so much as in thought. Praying ever heartily to the heavenly powers, that they will direct your course home againe to me, before your prefixed date, or else I shall live in continual languishing. In the knitting up of this woful parting, embracing and kissing either infinit times, the Lady tooke a Ring from off her finger, and giving it to her husband, said. If I chaunce to die before I see you againe, remember me when you looke on this. He receiving the Ring, and bidding all the rest of his Friends farewell, mounted on horsebacke, and rode away wel attended.

Being come unto Geneway, he and his company boorded a Galley, and (in few dayes after) arrived at Acres, where they joyned themselves with the Christian Army, wherein there happened a verie dangerous mortality: During which time of so sharpe visitation (the cause unknowne whence it proceeded) whether thorough the industrie, or rather the good Fortune of Saladine, well-neere all the rest of the Christians (which escaped death) were surprized his prisoner (without a blow strucken) and sundred and imprisoned in divers Townes and Citties. Amongest the which number of prisoners, it was Signior Thorelloes chaunce to be one, and walked in bonds to Alexandria, where being unknowne, and fearing least he should be discovered: constrained thereto meerly by necessity, hee shewed himselfe in the condition of a Faulconer;

wherein he was very excellently experienced, and by which means his profession was made knowne to Saladine, hee delivered out of prison, and created the Soldans Faulconer.

Thorello (whom the Soldane called by no other name, then the Christian, neyther of them knowing the other) sadly now remembred his departure from Pavia, devising and practising many times, how he might escape thence, but could not compasse it by any possible meanes. Wherefore, certaine Ambassadours beeing sent by the Genewayes, to redeeme divers Cittizens of theirs, there detained as prisoners, and being ready to returne home againe: he purposed to write to his Wife, that he was living, and wold repaire to her so soone as he could, desiring the still continued remembrance of her limited time. By close and cunning meanes hee wrote the Letter, earnestly intreating one of the Ambassadors (who knew him perfectly, but made no outward apparance thereof) to deale in such sort for him, that the Letter might be delivered to the handes of the Abbot Di San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, who was (indeede) his Unckle.

While Thorello remayned in this his Faulconers condition, it fortuned uppon a day, that Saladine, conversing with him about his Hawkes: Thorello chanced to smile, and used such a kinde of gesture or motion with his Lippes, which Saladine (when he was in his house at Pavia) had heedfully observed, and by this note, instantly he remembred Signior Thorello, and began to eye him very respectively, perswading himselfe that he was the same man. And therefore falling from their former kinde of discoursing: Tell mee Christian (quoth Saladine) what Country-man art thou of the West? Sir, answered Signiour Thorello, I am by Country a Lombard, borne in a Citty called Pavia, a poore man, and of as poore condition.

So soone as Saladine had heard these Words; becomming assured in that which (but now) he doubted, he saide within himselfe. Now the Gods have given me time, wherein I may make knowne to this man, how thankefully I accepted his kinde courtesie, and cannot easily forget it. Then, without saying any thing else, causing his Guard-robe to be set open, he tooke him with him thither, and sayde. Christian, observe well all these Garments, and quicken thy remembrance, in telling mee truly, whether thou hast seene any of them before now, or no. Signiour Thorello looked on them all advisedly, and espyed those two especiall Garments, which his Wife had given one of the strange Merchants; yet he durst not credit it, or that possibly it could be the same, neverthelesse he said. Sir, I doe not know any of them, but true it is, that these two doe resemble two such Robes, as I was wont to weare my selfe, and these (or the like) were given to three Merchants, that happened to visite my poore house.

Now could Saladine containe no longer, but embracing him joyfully in his armes, he said. You are Signior Thorello d'Istria, and I am one of those three Merchants to whom your Wife gave these Roabes: and now the time is come to give you credible intelligence of my Merchandise, as I promised at my departing from you, for such a time (I told you) would come at length. Thorello, was both glad, and bashfull together: glad, that he had entertained such a Guest, and bashfully ashamed, that his welcome had not exceeded in more bountifull manner. Thorello, replyed Saladine, seeing the Gods have sent you so happily to me: account your selfe to be soly Lord here, for I am now no more then a private man.

I am not able to expresse their counterchanges of courtesie, Saladine commanding him to be cloathed in Royall garments, and brought into the presence of his very greatest Lords, where having spoken liberally in his due commendation, he commanded them to honour him as himselfe, if they expected any grace or favour from him, which every one did immediatly, but (above all the rest) those two Baschaes, which accompanied Saladine at his house. The greatnesse of this pompe and glory, so suddenly throwne on Signior Thorello, made him halfe forget all matters of Lomberdie; and so much the rather, because he had no doubt at all, but that his letters, were safely come to the hands of his Uncle.

Here I am to tell you, that in the Campe or Army of the Christians, on the day when Saladine made his surprizall, there was a Provinciall Gentleman dead and buried, who was Signior Thorello de Dignes, a man of very honourable and great esteeme, in which respect (Signior Thorello d'Istria, knowne throughout the Army, by his Nobility and valour) whosoever heard that Signior Thorello was dead: beleeved it to be Thorello d'Istria, and not he of Dignes, so that Thorello d'Istriaes unknowne surprizall and thraldome, made it also to passe for an assured truth.

Beside, many Italians returning home, and carrying this report for credible; some were so audaciously presumptuous, as they avouched upon their oathes, that not onely they saw him dead, but were present at his buriall likewise. Which rumour comming to the eare of his Wife, and likewise to his kinred and hers: procured a great and grievous mourning among them, and all that happened to heare thereof.

Over-tedious time it would require, to relate at large, the publique griefe and sorrow, with the continuall lamentations of his Wife, who (within some few moneths after) became tormented with new marriage solicitings, before she had halfe sighed for the first: the very greatest persons of Lomberdie making the motion, being daily followed and furthered by her owne brothers and friends. Still (drowned in teares) she returned denyall, till in the end, when no contradiction could prevaile, to satisfie her parents, and the importunate pursuers: she was constrained to reveale, the charge imposed on her by her Husband, which shee had vowed infallibly to keepe, and till that very time, she would in no wise consent.

While wooing for a second wedding with Adalietta, proceeded in this manner at Pavia, it chanced on a day, that Signior Thorello had espied a man in Alexandria, whom he saw with the Geneway Ambassadours, when they set thence towards Geneway with their Gallies. And causing him to be sent for, he demaunded of him, the successe of the voyage, and when the Gallies arrived at Geneway; whereto he returned him this answere. My Lord, our Gallies made a very fatall voyage, as it is (already) too well knowne in Creete, where my dwelling is. For when we drew neere Sicilie, there suddenly arose a very dangerous North-West-winde, which drove us on the quicke-Sands of Barbarie, where not any man escaped with life, onely my selfe excepted, but (in the wracke) two of my brethren perished.

Signior Thorello, giving credit to the mans words, because they were most true indeed, and remembring also, that the time limitted to his Wife, drew neere expiring within very few dayes, and no newes now possibly to be sent thither of his life, his Wife would questionlesse be marryed againe: he fell into such a deepe conceited melancholly, as food and sleepe forsooke him, whereupon, he kept his bed, setting downe his peremptory resolution for death. When Saladine (who dearely loved him) heard thereof, he came in all haste to see him, and having (by many earnest perswasions and entreaties) understood the cause of his melancholly and sickenesse: he very severely reproved him, because he could no sooner acquaint him therewith. Many kind and comfortable speeches, he gave him, with constant assurance, that (if he were so minded) he would so order the businesse for him; as he should be at Pavia, by the same time as he had appointed to his

Wife, and revealed to him also the manner how.

Thorello verily beleeved the Soldanes promise, because he had often heard the possibility of performance, and others had effected as much, divers times else-where: whereupon he began to comfort himselfe, soliciting the Soldan earnestly that it might be accomplished. Saladine sent for one of his Sorcerers (of whose skill he had formerly made experience) to take a direct course, how Signior Thorello should be carryed (in one night) to Pavia, and being in his bed. The Magitian undertooke to doe it, but, for the Gentlemans more ease, he must first be possessed with an entraunced dead sleep. Saladine being thus assured of the deeds full effecting, he came againe to Thorello, and finding him to be setled for Pavia (if possibly it might be accomplished by the determined time, or else no other expectation but death) he said unto him as followeth.

Signior Thorello, if with true affection you love your Wife, and misdoubt her marriage to some other man: I protest unto you, by the supreme powers, that you deserve no reprehension in any manner whatsoever. For, of all the Ladyes that ever I have seene, she is the onely woman, whose carriage, vertues, and civile speaking (setting aside beauty, which is but a fading flowre) deserveth most graciously to be respected, much more to be affected in the highest degree. It were to me no meane favour of our Gods, (seeing Fortune directed your course so happily hither) that for the short or long time we have to live, we might reigne equally together in these Kingdomes under my subjection. But if such grace may not be granted me, yet, seeing it stands mainly upon the perill of your life, to be at Pavia againe by your own limitted time, it is my chiefest comfort, that I am therewith acquainted, because I intended to have you conveighed thither, yea, even into your owne house, in such honourable order as your vertues doe justly merit, which in regard it cannot be so conveniently performed, but as I have already informed you, and as the necessity of the case urgently commandeth; accept it as it may be best accomplished.

Great Saladine (answered Thorella) effects (without words) have already sufficiently warranted your Gracious disposition towards me, farre beyond any requitall remayning in me; your word onely being enough for my comfort in this case, either dying or living. But in regard you have taken such order for my departure hence, I desire to have it done with all possible expedition, because to morrow is the very last day, that I am to be absent. Saladine protested that it should be done, and the same evening in the great Hall of his Pallace, commanded a rich and costly Bedde to be set up, the mattras formed after the Alexandrian manner, of Velvet and cloth Gold, the Quilts, counterpoints and coverings, sumptuously imbroydered with Orient Pearles and Precious Stones, supposed to be of inestimable value, and two rarely wrought Pillowes, such as best beseemed so stately a Bedde, the Curtaines and Vallans every way equall to the other pompe.

Which being done, he commanded that Thorello (who was indifferently recovered) should be attyred in one of his owne sumptuous Saracine Roabes, the very fairest and richest that ever was seene, and on his head a Majesticall Turbant, after the manner of his owne wearing, and the houre appearing to be somewhat late, he with many of his best Baschaes, went to the Chamber where Thorello was, and sitting downe a while by him, in teares thus he spake. Signior Thorello, the houre for sundering you and me, is now very neere, and because I cannot beare you company, in regard of the businesse you goe about, and which by no meanes will admit it: I am to take my leave of you in this Chamber, and therefore am purposely come to doe it. But before I bid you farewell, let me entreat you, by the love and friendship confirmed betweene us, to be mindfull of me, and to take such order (your affaires being fully finished in Lombardie) that I may once more enjoy the sight of you here, for a mutuall solace and satisfaction of our mindes, which are now divided by this urgent hast. Till which may be granted, let me want no visitation of your kind letters, commanding thereby of me, whatsoever here can possibly be done for you: assuring your selfe, no man living can command me as you doe.

Signior Thorello could not forbeare weeping, but being much hindred therby, answered in few words. That he could not possibly forget, his Gracious favours and extraordinary benefits used towards him, but would accomplish whatsoever hee commaunded, according as heaven did enable him.

Hereupon, Saladine embracing him, and kissing his forehead, said. All my Gods goe with you, and guard you from any perill, departing so out of the Chamber weeping, and his Baschaes (having likewise taken their leave of Thorello) followed Saladine into the Hall, whereas the Bedde stood readily prepared. Because it waxed very late, and the Magitian also there attending for his dispatch: the Phisitian went with the potion to Thorello, and perswading him, in the way of friendship, that it was onely to strengthen him after his great weaknes: he drank it off, being thereby immediately entraunced, and so presently sleeping, was (by Saladines command) laid on the sumptuous and costly Bed, whereon stood an Imperiall Crowne of infinite value, appearing (by a description engraven on it) that Saladine sent it to Madame Adalietta, the wife of Thorello. On his finger also hee put a Ring, wherein was enchased an admirable Carbuncle, which seemed like a flaming Torche, the value thereof not to bee estimated. By him likewise hee laid a rich sword, with the girdle, hangers, and other furniture, such as seldome can be seene the like. Then hee laid a Jewell on the Pillow by him, so sumptuouslie embelished with Pearles and precious Stones, as might have beseemed the greatest Monarch in the World to weare. Last of all, on either side of them, hee set two great Basons of pure Gold, full of double ducates, many cords of Orient Pearles, Rings, Girdles, and other costly Jewells (over-tedious to bee recounted) and kissing him once more as hee lay in the bedde, commanded the Magitian to dispatch and be gone.

Instantly, the bedde and Thorello in it, in the presence of Saladine, was invisibly carried thence, and while he sate conferring with his Baschaes, the bed, Signior Thorello, and all the rich Jewells about him, was transported and set in the Church of San Pietro in Ciel d'Ore in Pavia, according to his own request, and soundly sleeping, being placed directly before the high Altar. Afterward, when the bells rung to Mattines, the Sexton entring the Church with a light in his hand (where hee beheld a light of greater splendor) and suddenly espied the sumptuous bedde there standing: not only was he smitten into admiration, but hee ranne away also very fearefully. When the Abbot and the Monkes mette him thus running into the Cloyster, they became amazed, and demanded the reason why he ranne in such haste, which the Sexton told them. How? quoth the Abbot, thou art no childe, or a new-come hither, to be so easilie affrighted in our holy Church, where Spirits can have no power to walke, God and Saint Peter (wee hope) are stronger for us then so: wherefore turne backe with us, and let us see the cause of thy feare.

Having lighted many Torches, the Abbot and his Monkes entred with the Sexton into the Church, where they beheld the wonderful riche bedde, and the Knight lying fast asleepe in it. While they stood all in amazement, not daring to approach neere the bedde, whereon lay such costly Jewells: it chanced that Signior Thorello awaked, and breathed forth a vehement sigh. The Monkes and the Abbot seeing him to stirre, ranne all away in feare, crying aloud, God and S. Peter defend us.

By this time Thorello had opened his eyes, and looking round about him, perceived that hee was in the place of Saladines promise, whereof hee was not a little joyfull. Wherefore, sitting up in the bedde, and particularly observing all the things about him: albeit he knew sufficiently the magnificence of Saladine, yet now it appeared far greater to him, and imagined more largely thereof, then hee could doe before. But yet, without any other ceremony, seeing the flight of the Monkes, hearing their cry, and perceiving the reason; he called the Abbot by his name, desiring him not to be afraid, for he was his Nephew Thorello, and no other.

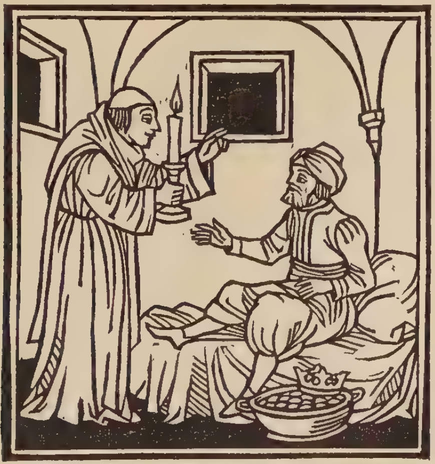
When the Abbot heard this, hee was ten times worse affrighted then before, because (by publique fame) hee had beene so many moneths dead and buried; but receiving (by true arguments) better assurance of him, and hearing him still call him by his name: blessing himselfe with the signe of the Crosse, hee went somewhat neerer to the bed, when Thorello said. My loving Uncle, and religious holy Father, wherof are you afraid? I am your loving Nephew, newly returned from beyond the Seas. The Abbot, seeing his beard to be grown long, and his habit after the Arabian fashion, did yet collect some resemblance of his former countenance; and being better perswaded of him, tooke him by the hand, saying:

Sonne thou art happily returned, yet there is not any man in our Citie, but doth verily beleeve thee to bee dead, and therefore doe not much wonder at our feare. Moreover, I dare assure thee, that thy Wife Adalietta, being conquered by the controuling command, and threatnings of her kinred (but much against her owne minde) is this very morning to be married to a new husband, and the marriage feast is solemnly prepared, in honour of this second nuptialls.

Thorello arising out of the bedde, gave gracious salutations to the Abbot and his Monkes, intreating earnestly of them all, that no word might be spoken of his returne, untill he had compleated an important businesse. Afterward, having safely secured the bedde, and all the rich Jewells, he fully acquainted the Abbot with all his passed fortunes, whereof he was immeasurably joyfull, and having satisfied him, concerning the new elected husband, Thorello said unto the Abbot. Unckle, before any rumour of my returne, I would gladly see my wives behavior at this new briding feast, and although men of religion are seldome seene at such Joviall meetings: yet (for my sake) doe you so order the matter, that I (as an Arabian stranger) may be a guest under your protection; wherto the Abbot very gladly condescended.

In the morning, he sent to the Bridegroom, and advertised him, that he (with a stranger newly arrived) intended to dine with him, which the Gentleman accepted in thankefull manner. And when dinner time came, Thorello in his strange disguise went with the Abbot to the Bridegroomes house, where he was lookt on with admiration of all the guests, but not knowne or suspected by any one; because the Abbot reported him to be a Sarracine, and sent by the Soldane (in Ambassage) to the King of France. Thorello was seated at a by-table, but directly opposite to the new Bride, whom hee much delighted to looke on, and easily collected by her sad countenance, that shee was scarcely well pleased with this new nuptialls. She likewise beheld him very often, not in regard of any knowlege she took of him: for the bushiness of his beard, strangeness of habit, (but most of all) firm beleefe of his death, was the maine prevention.

At such time as Thorello thought it convenient, to approve how farre he was falne out of her remembrance; he took the ring which she gave him at his departure, and calling a young Page that waited on none but the Bride, said to him in Italian: Faire youth, goe to the Bride, and saluting her from me, tell her, it is a custome observed in my Country, that when any Stranger (as I am heere) sitteth before a new married Bride, as now shee is, in signe that hee is welcome to her feast, she sendeth the same Cup (wherein she drinketh her selfe) full of the best wine, and when the stranger hath drunke so much as him pleaseth, the Bride then pledgeth him with all the rest. The Page delivered the message to the Bride, who, being a woman of honourable disposition, and reputing him to be a Noble Gentleman, to testifie that his presence there was very acceptable to her, shee commanded a faire Cuppe of gold (which stood directlie before her) to bee neately washed, and when it was filled with excellent Wine, caused it to bee carried to the stranger, and so it was done.



Thorello having drunke a heartie draught to the Bride, conveyed the Ring into the Cuppe, before any person could perceive it, and having left but small store of Wine in it, covered the Cuppe, and sent it againe to the Bride, who received it very graciously, and to honour the Stranger in his Countries custome, dranke up the rest of the Wine, and espying the Ring, shee tooke it forth undescried by any: Knowing it to be the same Ring which shee gave Signior Thorello at his parting from her; she fixed her eyes often on it, and as often on him, whom she thought to be a stranger, the cheerfull bloud mounting up into her cheeks, and returning againe with remembrance to her heart, that (howsoever thus disguised) he only was her husband.

Like one of Bacchus Froes, up furiously she started, and throwing downe the Table before her, cried out aloud: This is my Lord and Husband, this truely is my Lord Thorello. So running to the Table where he sate, without regard of all the riches thereon, down she threw it likewise, and clasping her armes about his necke, hung so mainly on him (weeping, sobbing, and kissing him) as she could not be taken off by any of the company, nor shewed any moderation in this excesse of passion, till Thorello spake, and entreated her to be more patient, because this extremity was over-dangerous for her. Thus was the solemnitie much troubled, but every one there very glad and joyfull for the recovery of such a famous and worthy Knight, who intreated them all to vouchsafe him silence, and so related all his fortunes to them, from the time of his departure, to the instant houre. Concluding withall, that hee was no way offended with the new Bridegroome, who upon the so constant report of his death, deserved no blame in making election of his wife.

The Bridegroome, albeit his countenance was somewhat cloudie, to see his hope thus disappointed: yet granted freely, that Adalietto was Thorello's wife in equitie, and hee could not justly lay any claime to her. She also resigned the Crown and Rings which she had so lately received of her new Spouse, and put that on her finger which she found in the Cup, and that Crowne was set upon her head, in honor sent her from great Saladine. In which triumphant manner, she left the new Bridegrooms abiding, and repayred home to Thorello's house, with such pompe and magnificence as never had the like been seene in Pavia before, all the Citizens esteeming it as a miracle, that they had so happily recovered Signior Thorello againe.

Some part of the Jewells he gave to him, who had beene at cost with the marriage feasting, and some to his Uncle the Abbot, beside a bountie bestowed on the Monkes. Then he sent a messenger to Saladine, with Letters of his whole successe, and confessing himselfe (for ever) his obliged servant: living many yeeres (after) with his wife Adalietta, and using greater curtesies to strangers, then ever before he had done.

In this manner ended the troubles of Signior Thorello, and the afflictions of his dearely affected Lady, with due recompence to their honest and ready courtesies. Many strive (in outward shew) to doe the like, who although they are sufficiently able, doe performe it so basely, as it rather redoundeth to their shame, then honour. And therefore if no merit ensue thereon, but onely such disgrace as justly should follow; let them lay the blame upon themselves.

THE TENTH NOVELL

SET DOWNE AS AN EXAMPLE OR WARNING TO ALL WEALTHIE MEN, HOW TO HAVE CARE OF MARRYING THEMSELVES. AND LIKEWISE TO POORE AND MEANE WOMEN, TO BE PATIENT IN THEIR FORTUNES, AND OBEDIENT TO THEIR HUSBANDS.

The *Marquesse of Saluzzo, named Gualtiero, being constrained by the importunate solliciting of his Lords, and other inferiour people, to joyne himselfe in marriage; tooke a woman according to his owne liking, called Grizelda, she being the daughter of a poore Countriman, named Janiculo, by whom he had two children, which he pretended to be secretly murdered. Afterward, they being grown to yeres of more stature, and making shew of taking in marriage another wife, more worthy of his high degree and Calling: made a seeming publique liking of his owne daughter, expulsing his wife Grizelda poorely from him. But finding her incomparable patience; more dearely (then before) hee received her into favour againe, brought her home to his owne Pallace, where (with her children) hee caused her and them to be respectively honoured, in despight of all her adverse enemies.*

QUESTIONLESSE, the Kings Novell did not so much exceed the rest in length, but it proved as pleasing to the whole assembly, and past with their generall approbation, till Dioneus (in a merry jesting humour) said. The plaine honest simple man, that stood holding the Candle, to see the setting on of his Mules tayle; deserved two penny-worth of more praise, then all our applauding of Signior Thorello: And knowing himselfe to bee left for the last speaker, thus he began.

Milde and modest Ladies, for ought I can perceive to the contrary, this day was dedicated to none but Kings, Soldanes, and great Potentates, not in favour of any inferiour or meaner persons. And therefore, because I would be loth to dis-ranke my selfe from the rest, I purpose to speake of a Lord Marquesse, not any matter of great magnificence, but rather in a more humble nature, and sorted to an honest end: which yet I will not advise any to immitate, because (perhaps) they cannot so well digest it, as they did whom my Novell concerneth; thus then I begin.

It it a great while since, when among those that were Lord Marquesses of Saluzzo, the very greatest and worthiest man of them al, was a young Noble Lord, named Gualtiero, who having neyther wife nor childe, spent his time in nothing else but hawking and hunting: nor had he any minde of marriage, or to enjoy the benefit of children, wherein many did repute him the wiser. But this being distastfull to his subjects, they very often earnestly solicited him, to match himselfe with a wife, to the end, that hee might not decease without an heire, nor they be left destitute of a succeeding Lord; offering themselves to provide him of such a one, so well descended by Father and Mother, as not only should confirm their hope, but also yeeld him high contentment; whereto the Lord Marquess thus answered.

Worthie friends, you would constraine me to the thing, wherewith I never had any intent to meddle, considering, how difficult a case it is to meet with such a woman, who can agree with a man in all his conditions, and how great the number is of them, who daily happen on the contrarie: but most (and worst of all the rest) how wretched and miserable prooves the life of man, who is bound to live with a wife not fit for him. And in saying, you can learn to understand the custome and qualities of children, by behaviour of the fathers and mothers, and so to provide mee of a wife, it is a meere argument of folly: for neither shall I comprehend, or you either, the secret inclinations of parents; I meane of the Father, and much lesse the complexion of the mother. But admitte it were within compasse of power to know them; yet it is a frequent sight, and observed every day; that daughters doe resemble neither father nor mother, but that they are naturally governed by their owne instinct.

But because you are so desirous to have me fettered in the chains of wedlocke; I am contented to grant what you request. And because I would have no complaint made of any but my selfe, if matters should not happen answerable to expectation; I will make mine owne eyes my electors, and not see by any others sight. Giving you this assurance before, that if she whom I shall make choice of, be not of you honoured and respected as your Lady and Mistresse: it will ensue to your detriment, how much you have displeased me, to take a wife at your request, and against mine owne will.

The Noble men answered, that they were well satisfied, provided that he tooke a wife.

Some indifferent space of time before, the beauty, manners, and well-seeming vertues, of a poore Countrie-mans daughter, dwelling in no farre distant village, had appeared very pleasing to the Lord Marquesse, and gave him full perswasion, that with her hee should lead a comfortable life. And therefore without any further search or inquisition, he absolutely resolved to marry her, and having conferred with her Father, agreed, that his daughter should be his wife. Whereupon, the Marquesse made a generall convocation of all his Lords, Barons, and other of his especiall friends, from all parts of his Dominion; and when they were assembled together, hee then spake unto them in manner as followeth.

Honourable friends, it appeared pleasing to you all, and yet (I thinke) you are of the same minde, that I should dispose my selfe to take a wife: and I thereto condescended, more to yeeld you contentment, then for any particular desire in my selfe. Let mee now remember you of your solemne made promise, with full consent to honor and obey her (whosoever) as your Soveraigne Lady and Mistresse, that I shall elect to make my wife: and now the time is come, for my exacting the performance of that promise, and which I look you must constantly keepe. I have made choyce of a yong virgine, answerable to mine owne heart and liking, dwelling not farre off hence, whom I intend to make my wife, and (within few daies) to have her brought home to my Pallace. Let your care and diligence then extend so farre, as to see that the feast may be sumptuous, and her entertainment to bee most honourable: to the end that I may receive as much contentment in your promise performed, as you shall perceive I doe in my choice.

The Lords and all the rest, were wondrously joyfull to heare him so well inclined, expressing no lesse by their shouts and jocund suffrages: protesting cordially, that she should be welcommed with pompe and majestie, and honoured of them all, as their Liege Ladie and Soveraigne. Afterward, they made preparation for a princely and magnificent feast, as the Marquesse did the like, for a marriage of extraordinary state and qualitie, inviting all his kinred, friends, and acquaintance in all parts and Provinces, about him. Hee made also readie most riche and costly garments, shaped by the body of a comely young Gentlewoman, who he knew to be equall in proportion and stature, to her of whom hee hade made his election.

When the appointed nuptiall day was come, the Lord Marques, about nine of the clocke in the morning, mounted on horsebacke, as all the rest did, who came to attend him honourably, and having all things in due readinesse with them, he said: Lords, it is time for us to goe fetch the Bride. So on hee rode with his traine, to the same poore Village whereat shee dwelt, and when hee was come to her Fathers house, hee saw the maiden returning very hastily from a Well, where shee had beene to fetch a paile of water, which shee set downe, and stood (accompanied with other maidens) to see the passage by of the Lord Marquesse and his traine. Gualtiero called her by her name, which was Grizelda, and asked her, where her Father was: who bashfully answered him, and with an humble courtesie, saying. My gracious Lord, hee is in the house.

Then the Marquesse dismounted from his horse, commanding every one to attend him, then all alone hee entred into the poore Cottage, where he found the maides father, being named Janiculo, and said unto him. God speed good Father, I am come to espouse thy daughter Grizelda: but first I have a few demands to make, which I will utter to her in thy presence. Then hee turned to the maide, and saide.

Faire Grizelda, if I make you my wife, will you doe your best endeavour to please me, in all things which I shall doe or say? will you also be gentle, humble, and patient? with divers other the like questions: whereto she still answered, that she would, so neere as heaven (with grace) should enable her.

Presently he tooke her by the hand, so led her forth of the poore homely house, and in the presence of all his company, with his owne hands, he took off her meane wearing garments, smocke and all, and cloathed her with those Robes of State which he had purposely brought thither for her, and plaiting her haire over her shoulders, hee placed a Crowne of gold on her head, whereat every one standing as amazed, and wondring not a little, hee said: Grizelda, wilt thou have me to thy husband? Modestly blushing, and kneeling on the ground, she answered. Yes my gracious Lord, if you will accept so poore a maiden to be your wife. Yes Grizelda, quoth hee, with this holy kisse, I confirme thee for my wife; and so espoused her before them all. Then mounting her on a milke-white Palfray, brought thither for her, shee was thus honourably conducted to her Pallace.

Now concerning the marriage feast and triumphes, they were performed with no lesse pompe, then if she had beene daughter to the King of France. And the young Bride apparantly declared, that (with her garments) her minde and behavior were quite changed. For indeed shee was (as it were shame to speake otherwise) a rare creature, both of person and perfections, and not onely was shee absolute for beautie, but so sweetely amiable, gracious, and goodlie; as if she were not the daughter of poore Janicula, and a Countrie Shepheardesse, but rather of some Noble Lord, whereat every one wondred that formerly had knowne her. Beside all this, shee was so obedient to her husband, so fervent in all dutifull offices, and patient, without the very least provoking: as hee held himselfe much more then contented, and the onely happy man of the world.

In like manner, towards the subjects of her Lord and Husband, she shewed her selfe alwayes so benigne and gracious; as there was not any one, but the more they lookt on her, the better they loved her, honouring her voluntarily, and praying to the heavens, for her health, dignity and well-fares long continuance. Speaking now (quite contrary to their former opinion of the Marquesse) honourably and worthily, that he had shewne him selfe a singular wise man, in the election of his Wife, which few else (but he) in the world would have done: because their judgement might fall farre short, of discerning those great and precious vertues, veiled under a homely habite, and obscured in a poore Countrey cottage. To be briefe, in very short time, not onely the Marquisate it selfe, but all neighbouring Provinces round about, had no other common talke, but of her rare course of life, devotion, charity, and all good actions else; quite quailing all sinister Instructions of her Husband, before he received her in marriage.

About foure or five yeeres after the birth of her daughter, shee conceived with child againe, and (at the limitted houre of deliverance) had a goodly Sonne, to the no little liking of the Marquesse. Afterward, a strange humour entred into his braine, namely, that by a long continued experience, and courses of intollerable quality; he would needes make proofe of his faire Wives patience. First he began to provoke her by injurious speeches, shewing fierce and frowning lookes to her, intimating; that his people grew displeased with him, in regard of his Wives base birth and education, and so much the rather, because she was likely to bring children, who (by her blood) were no better then beggers, and murmured at the daughter already borne. Which words when Grizelda heard, without any alteration of countenance, for the least distemperature in any appearing action she said.

My honourable and gracious Lord, dispose of me, as you thinke best, for your owne dignity and contentment, for I shall therewith be well pleased: as she that knowes her selfe, farre inferiour to the meanest of your people, much lesse worthy of the honour, whereto you liked to advance me.

This answere was very welcome to the Marquesse, as apparantly perceiving hereby, that the dignity whereto hee had exalted her, or any particular favours beside, could not infect her with any pride, coynesse, or disdaine. Not long after, having told her in plaine and open speeches, that his subjects could not endure her so late borne daughter: he called a trusty servant of his, and having instructed him what he should doe, sent him to Grizelda, and he being alone with her, looking very sadde, and much perplexed in mind, he saide. Madame, except I intend to loose mine owne life, I must accomplish what my Lord hath strictly enjoyned me, which is, to take this your yong daughter, and then I must: So breaking off abruptly, the Lady hearing his words, and noting his frowning lookes, remembring also what the Marquesse himselfe had formerly said; she presently imagined, that he had commanded his servant to kill the childe. Suddenly therefore, she tooke it out of the Cradle, and having sweetly kissed, and bestowne her blessing on it (albeit her heart throbbed, with the inward affection of a Mother) without any alteration of countenance, she tenderly laid it in the servants armes, and said. Here friend, take it, and doe with it as thy Lord and mine hath commanded thee: but leave it in no rude place, where birds or savage beasts may devour it, except it be his will to have it so.

The servant departing from her with the child, and reporting the Marquesse what his Lady had said; he wondered at her incomparable constancy. Then he sent it by the same servant to Bologna, to an honourable Lady his kinsewoman, requesting her (without revealing whose child it was) to see it both nobly and carefully educated.

At time convenient afterward, being with child againe, and delivered of a Princely Sonne (then which nothing could be more joyfull to the Marquesse) yet all this was not sufficient for him; but with farre ruder language then before, and lookes expressing harsh intentions, he said unto her. Grizelda, though thou pleasest me wonderfully, by the birth of this Princely Boy, yet my subjects are not therewith contented, but blunder abroad maliciously; that the grandchild of Janiculo, a poore countrey pezant, when I am dead and gone, must be their Soveraigne Lord and Master. Which makes me stand in feare of their expulsion, and to prevent that, I must be rid of this childe, as well as the other, and then send thee away from hence, that I may take another wife, more pleasing to them.

Grizelda, with a patient sufferent soule, hearing what he had said, returned no other answere but this. Most Gracious and Honourable Lord, satisfie and please your owne Royall minde, and never use any respect of me: for nothing is precious or pleasing to mee, but what may agree with your good liking. Within a while after, the Noble Marquesse in the like manner as he did before for the Daughter, so he sent the same servant for the Sonne, and seeming as if he had sent it to have been slaine, conveighed it to be nursed at Bologna, in company of his sweete Sister. Whereat the Lady shewed no other discontentment in any kinde, then formerly she had done for her Daughter, to the no meane marvell of the Marquesse, who protested in his soule, that the like woman was not in all the world beside. And were it not for his heedfull observation, how loving and carefull she was of her children, prizing them as dearely as her owne life: rash opinion might have perswaded him, that she had no more in her, then a carnall affection, not caring how many she had, so shee might thus easily be rid of them; but he knew her to be a truely vertuous mother, and wisely liable to endure his severest impositions.

His Subjects beleeving, that he had caused the children to bee slaine, blamed him greatly, thought him to be a most cruell man, and did highly compassionate the Ladies case: who when shee came in company of other Gentlewomen, which mourned for their deceassed children, would answere nothing else: but that they could not be more pleasing to her, then they were to the father that begot them.

Within certaine yeares after the birth of these children, the Marquesse purposed with himselfe, to make his last and finall proofe of faire Grizeldaes patience, and said to some neere about him: that he could no longer endure, to keepe Grizelda as his wife, confessing, he had done foolishly, and according to a young giddie braine, when he was so rash in the marriage of her. Wherfore he would send to the Pope, and purchase a dispensation from him, to repudiate Grizelda, and take another Wife. Wherein although they greatly reproved him; yet he told them plainely, that it must needes be so.

The Lady hearing these newes, and thinking she must returne againe to her poore father's house, and (perhaps) to her old occupation of keeping sheepe, as in her yonger dayes she had done, understanding withall, that another woman must enjoy him, whom shee dearely loved and honoured; you may well thinke (worthy Ladies) that her patience was now put to the maine proofe indeede. Neverthelesse, as with an invincible true vertuous courage, she had outstood all the other injuries of Fortune; so did she constantly settle her soule, to beare this with an undaunted countenance and behaviour.

At such time as was prefixed for the purpose, counterfeit Letters came to the Marquesse (as sent from Rome) which he caused to be publikely read in the hearing of his subjects: that the Pope had dispensed with him, to leave Grizelda, and marry with another Wife, wherefore, sending for her immediatly, in presence of them all, thus he spake to her. Woman, by concession sent me from the Pope, he hath dispensed with me, to make choyce of another Wife, and to free my selfe from thee. And because my predecessors have beene Noblemen, and great Lords in this Country, thou being the daughter of a poore Countrey Clowne, and their blood and mine notoriously imbased, by my marriage with thee: I intend to have thee no longer my Wife, but will returne thee home to thy Fathers house, with all the rich Dowry thou broughtest me; and then I wil take another Wife, with whom I am already contracted, better beseeming my birth, and farre more contenting and pleasing to my people.

The Lady hearing these words (not without much paine and difficulty) restrayned her teares, quite contrary to the naturall inclination of women, and thus answered. Great Marquesse, I never was so empty of discretion, but did alwayes acknowledge, that my base and humble condition, could not in any manner sute with your high blood and Nobility, and my being with you, I ever acknowledged, to proceed from heaven and you, not any merit of mine, but onely as a favour lent me, which you being now pleased to recall backe againe, I ought to be pleased (and so am) that it bee restored. Here is the Ring, wherewith you Espoused me; here (in all humility) I deliver it to you. You command me, to carry home the marriage Dowry which I brought with me: there is no need of a Treasurer to repay it me, neither any new purse to carry it in, much lesse any Sumpter to be laden with it. For (Noble Lord) it was never out of my memory, that you tooke me starke naked, and if it shall seeme sightly to you, that this body which hath borne two children, and begotten by you, must againe be seene naked; willingly must I depart hence naked. But I humbly beg of your Excellency, in recompence of my Virginity, which I brought you blamelesse, so much as in thought: that I may have but one of my wedding Smocks, onely to conceale the shame of nakednesse, and then I depart rich enough.

The Marquesse whose heart wept bloody teares, as his eyes would likewise gladly have yeelded their naturall tribute; covered all with a dissembled angry countenance, and starting up, said. Goe, give her a Smocke onely, and so send her gadding. All there present about him, entreated him to let her have a petticote, because it might not be said, that she who had been his Wife thirteene yeares and more, was sent away so poorely in her Smocke: but all their perswasions prevailed not with him. Naked in her Smocke, without hose or shoes, bareheaded, and not so much as a Cloth about her necke, to the great griefe and mourning of all that saw her, she went home to her old fathers house.

And he (good man) never beleeving, that the Marquesse would long keepe his daughter as his Wife, but rather expected daily, what now had happened: safely laid up the garments, whereof the Marquesse despoyled her, the same morning when he espoused her. Wherefore he delivered them to her, and she fell to her fathers houshold businesse, according as formerly she had done; sustayning with a great and unconquerable spirit, all the cruell assaults of her enemy Fortune.

About such time after, as suted with his owne disposition, the Marquesse made publiquely knowne to his subjects, that he meant to joyne in marriage again, with the daughter to one of the Counts of Panago, and causing preparation to be made for a sumptuous wedding; he sent for Grizelda, and she being come, thus he spake to her. The Wife that I have made the new election of, is to arrive here within very few dayes, and at her first comming, I would have her to be most honourably entertained. Thou knowest I have no women in my house, that can decke up the Chambers, and set all requisite things in due order, befitting for so solemne a Feast: and therefore I sent for thee, who knowing (better then any other) all the partes, provision and goods in the house, set every thing in such order, as thou shalt thinke necessary.

Invite such Ladies and Gentlewomen as thou wilt, and give them welcome, even as if thou wert the Lady of the house: and when the marriage is ended, returne then home to thy father againe.

Although these words pierced like wonding daggers, the heart of poore (but Noble patient) Grizelda, as being unable to forget the unequal'd love she bare to the Marquesse, though the dignitie of her former fortune, more easily slipt out of her remembrance; yet neverthelesse, thus she answered.

My Gracious Lord, I am glad I can doe you any service; wherein you shall find mee both willing and ready. In the same poore garments, as she came from her fathers house, (although shee was turned out in her Smocke) she began to sweep and make cleane the Chambers, rubbe the stooles and benches in the Hall, and ordered every in the Kitchin, as if she were the worst maide in all the house, never ceasing or giving over, till all things were in due and decent order as best beseemed in such a case. After all which was done, the Marquesse, having invited all the Ladies of the Countrey, to be present at so great a Feast: when the marriage day came, Grizelda, in her gowne of Countrey gray, gave them welcome, in honourable manner, and graced them all with very cheerefull countenance.

Gualtiero the Marquesse, who had caused his two children to be nobly nourished at Bologna, with a neere kinswoman of his, who had married with one of the Counts of Panago, his daughter being now aged twelve yeares old, and somewhat more, as also the Son about sixe or seven. He sent a Gentleman expresly to his kindred, to have them come and visite him at Saluzza, bringing his daughter and Sonne with them, attended in very honourable manner, and publishing every where as they came along, that the young Virgin (knowne to none but himselfe and them) should be the Wife to the Marquesse, and that onely was the cause of her comming. The Gentleman was not slacke, in the execution of the trust reposed in him: but having made convenient preparation; with the kindred, Sonne, daughter, and a worthy company attending on them, arrived at Saluzza about dinner time, where wanted no resort, from all neighbouring parts round about, to see the comming of the Lord Marquesses new Spouse.

By the Lords and Ladies she was joyfully entertained, and comming into the great Hall, where the tables were readily covered: Grizelda, in her homely Country habite, humbled her selfe before her, saying. Gracious welcome, to the new elected Spouse of the Lord Marquesse.

All the Ladies there present, who had very earnestly importuned Gualtiero (but in vaine) that Grizelda, might better be shut up in some Chamber, or else to lend her the wearing of any other garments, which formerly had been her owne, because she should not be so poorely seene among strangers: being seated at the Tables, she waited on them very serviceably. The yong Virgin was observed by every one, who spared not to say; that the Marquesse had made an excellent change: but above them all, Grizelda did most commend her, and so did her brother likewise, as young as he was, yet not knowing her to be his Sister.

Now was the Marquesse sufficiently satisfied in his soule, that he had seene so much as he desired, concerning the patience of his Wife, who in so many hart-grieving trials, was never noated so much as to alter her countenance. And being absolutely perswaded, that this proceeded not from any want of understanding in her, because he knew her to be singularly wise: he thought it high time now, to free her from these afflicting oppressions, and give her such assurance as she ought to have. Wherefore, commanding her into his presence, openly before all his assembled friends, smiling on her, he said. What thinkst thou Grizelda of our new chosen Spouse? My Lord (quoth she) I like her exceeding well, and if she be so wise, as she is faire (which verely I thinke she is) I make no doubt but you shall live with her, as the onely happy man of the world. But I humbly entreat your Honor (if I have any power in me to prevaile by) that you would not give her such cutting and unkind language, as you did to your other wife: for I cannot thinke her armed with such patience, as should (indeed) support them: as wel in regard she is much yonger, as also her more delicate breeding and education, whereas she who you had before, was brought up in continual toile and travaile.

When the Marquesse perceyved, that Grizelda beleeved verily, this yong daughter of hers should be his wife, and answered him in so honest and modest manner: he commanded her to sit downe by him, and saide. Grizelda, it is now more then fitte time, that thou shouldst taste the fruite of thy long admired patience, and that they who have thought me cruell, harsh and uncivill natured, should at length observe, that I have done nothing basely, or unadvisedly. For this was a worke premeditated before, for enstructing thee, what it is to be a married wife, and to let them know (whosoever they be) how to take and keepe a wife. Which hath begotten (to me) perpetuall joy and happinesse, so long as I have a day to live with thee: a matter whereof I stoode before greatly in feare, and which (in marriage I thought) would never happen to me.

It is not unknown to thee, in how many kinds (for my first proofe) I gave thee harsh and unpleasing speeches, which drawing no discontentment from thee, either in lookes, words, or behaviour, but rather such comfort as my soule desired, and so in my other succeedings afterward: in one minute now, I purpose to give thee that consolation, which I bereft thee of in many tempestuous stormes, and make a sweet restauration, for all thy former sower sufferinges. My faire and dearly affected Grizelda, shee whom thou supposest for my new elected Spouse, with a glad and cheerfull hart, imbrace for thine owne daughter, and this also her Brother, beeing both of them thy children and mine, in common opinion of the vulgar multitude, imagined to be (by my command) long since slaine. I am thy honourable Lord and Husband, who doth, and will love thee farre above all women else in the world; giving thee justly this deserved praise and commendation, That no man living hath the like Wife, as I have.

So, sweetly kissing her infinitely, and hugging her joyfully in his armes (the teares now streaming like new-let-loose Rivers, downe her faire face, which no disaster before could force from her) hee brought her, and seated her by her daughter, who was not a little amazed at so rare an alteration. Shee having (in zeale of affection) kissed and embraced them both, all else there present being clearely resolved from the former doubt which too long deluded them; the ladies arose jocondly from the tables, and attending on Grizelda to her Chamber, in signe of a more successfull augury to follow, tooke off her poor contemptible rags, and put on such costly robes, which (as Lady Marchionesse) she used to weare before.

Afterward, they waited on her into the Hall againe, being their true Soveraigne Lady and Mistresse, as she was no lesse in her poorest Garments; where all rejoycing for the new restored Mother, and happy recovery of so noble a son and daughter, the Festivall continued many months after. Now every one thought the Marquesse to be a noble and wise Prince, though somewhat sharpe and unsufferable, in the severe experiences made of his wife: but (above al) they reputed Grizelda, to be a most wise, patient, and vertuous Lady. The Count of Panago, within few daies after returned backe to Bologna; and the Lord Marques, fetching home old Janiculo from his country drudgery, to live with him (as his Father in law) in his Princely Palace, gave him honorable maintenance, wherein hee long continued, and ended his daies. Afterward, he matched his daughter in a Noble marriage: he and Grizelda living a long time together, in the highest honor that possibly could be.

What can now be saide to the contrary, but that poore Country Cottages, may yeeld as divine and excellent spirits, as the most stately and Royall mansions, which breed and bring uppe some, more worthy to be Hog-rubbers, then hold any soveraignty over men? Where is any other (beside Grizelda) who not only without a wet eye, but imboldned by a valiant and invincible courage: that can suffer the sharpe rigors, and (never the like heard of proofes) made by the Marquesse? Perhaps he might have met with another, who would have quitted him in a contrary kinde, and for thrusting her forth of doores in her smocke, could have found better succor somewhere else, rather then walke so nakedly in the cold streets.

Dioneus having thus ended his Novel, and the Ladies delivering their severall judgements, according to their owne fancies, some holding one conceite, others leaning to the contrary; one blaming this thing, and another commending that, the King lifting his eyes to heaven, and seeing the Sun began to fal low, by rising of the Evening Starre; without arising from his seat, spake as followeth. Discreet Ladies, I am perswaded you know sufficiently, that the sense and understanding of us mortals, consisteth not onely (as I think) by preserving in memory things past, or knowledge of them present; but such as both by the one and other, know how to foresee future occasions, are worthily thought wise, and of no common capacity.

It will be (to morrow) fifteene dayes, since we departed from the City of Florence, to come hither for our pastime and comfort, the conservation of our lives, and support of our health, by avoyding those melanchollies, griefes and anguishes, which we beheld daylie in our City, since the pestilentiall visitation beganne there, wherein (by my judgement) we have done well and honestly. Albeit some light Novels, perhaps attractive to a little wantonnes, as some say, and our Joviall feasting with good cheare, singing and dancing, may seeme matters inciting to incivility, especially in weake and shallow understandings. But I have neither seene, heard, or knowne, any acte, word, or whatsoever else, either on your part or ours, justly deserving to be blamed: but all has bin honest, as in a sweete and hermonious concord, such as might well beseeme the communitie of Brethren and Sisters; which assuredly, as well in regard of you, as us, hath much contented me.

And therefore, least by over-long consuetude, something should take life, which might be converted to a bad construction, and by our country demourance for so many dayes, some captious conceit may wrest out an ill imagination; I am of the minde (if yours be the like) seeing each of us hath had the honor, which now remaineth still on me: that it is very fitting for us, to returne thither from whence we came. And so much the rather, because this sociable meeting of ours, which already hath wonne the knowledge of many dwellers here about us, should not grow to such an increase, as might make our purposed pastime offensive to us. In which respect (if you allow of my advise) I wil keepe the Crowne till our departing hence; the which I intend shalbe to morrow: but if you determine otherwise, I am the man ready to make my resignation.

Many imaginations passed amongst the Ladies, and likewise the men, but yet in the end, they reputed the Kings counsell to bee the best and wisest, concluding to do as he thought convenient. Wherupon, hee called the Master of the housholde, and conferred with him, of the businesse belonging to the next morning, and then gave the company leave to rise. The Ladies and the rest, when they were risen, fel some to one kinde of recreation, and others as their fancies served them, even as (before) they had done. And when Supper time came, they dispatcht it in very loving manner. Then they began to play on instruments, sing and dance, and Madame Lauretta leading the dance: the King commaunded Madame Fiammetta to sing a song, which pleasantly she began in this manner.

THE SONG

THE CHORUS SUNG BY ALL THE REST OF THE COMPANY

If Love were free from Jealousie,
No Lady living,
Had lesse heart-greeving,
Or liv'd so happily as I.

If gallant youth
In a faire friend, a woman could content,
If vertues prize, valour and hardiment,
Wit, carriage, purest eloquence,
Could free a woman from impatience:
Then I am she can vaunt (if I were wise)
All these in one faire flower,
Are in my power,
And yet I boast no more but trueth.
If Love were free from jealousie, etc.

But I behold
That other Women are as wise as I
Which killes me quite,
Fearing false sirquedrie.
For when my fire begins to flame
Others desires misguide my aim,
And so bereaves me of secure delight.
Onely through fond mistrust, he is unjust:
Thus are my comforts hourely hot and cold.
If Love were free, etc.

If in my friend,
I found like faith, as manly minde I know;
Mistrust were slaine.
But my fresh griefes still grow,
By sight of such as do allure,
So I can thinke none true, none sure,
But all would rob me of my golden gaine.
Loe thus I dye, in Jealousie,
For losse of him, on whom I most depend.
If Love were free, etc.

Let me advise
Such Ladies as in Love are bravely bold,
Not to wrong me, I scorne to be controld.
If any one I chance to finde,

By winkes, words, smiles, in crafty kinde,
  Seeking for that, which onely mine should be:
Then I protest, to do my best,
And make them know, that they are scarsly wise.

    If Love were free from jealousie,
      I know no Lady living,
      Could have lesse heart-greeving,
    Or live so happily as I.

So soone as Madam Fiammetta had ended her Song; Dioneus, who sate by her, smiling said. Truly Madam, you may do us a great courtesie, to expresse your selfe more plainly to us all, least (thorow ignorance) the possession may be imposed on your selfe, and so you remaine the more offended. After the Song was past, divers other were sung beside, and it now drawing wel-neere midnight, by the Kings command, they all went to bed. And when new day appeared, and all the world awaked out of sleepe, the Master of the Houshold having sent away the carriages; they returned (under the conduct of their discreet King) to Florence, where the three Gentlemen left the seven Ladies at the Church of Santa Maria Novella, from whence they went with them at the first. And having parted with kinde salutations, the Gentlemen went whether themselves best pleased, and the Ladies repaired home to their houses.

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